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COMING HOME



BY THE SAME AUTHOR:
TWO WORLDS



COMING HOME

A Novel


by

LESTER COHEN

LONDON

VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD


1946



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TO THE SOLDIERS
(*INCLUDING MY WIFE AND SON*)

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS STORY COULD HAVE been told in other cities. It is told in Pittsburgh because Pittsburgh is the heart of the war effort. A few well-known public figures, such as Billy Mitchell and Andrew Carnegie, are mentioned by name in passing. Otherwise, no character is intended to represent any actual person, living or dead, and any similarity of names or attributes is entirely accidental.

Book I

THE SQUIRE

CHAPTER I

NIGHT OF A MARINE

PITTSBURGH COOKS STEEL. It cooks steel by day and it cooks steel by night. By day the bronze smoke of its chimneys tints the sky. And by night its tongues of flame, rising from the throats of its furnaces, seem to say: Here the Victory was made. Here we made the steel for Anzio, Tarawa, Yawata, the block-busters for Tokyo, Berlin.

For Pittsburgh not only made steel for the United States, but for the United Nations. To friend and foe alike went its missiles and messages of fire. Pittsburgh finally made three times as much steel as Germany. Here the war was made. And here the designs of the post-war world first took mechanistic shape.

It is a city like a colossal furnace. No other city in the world, no volcano, sends up such showers of sparks, such smoke, such chemical fume, such fire. Rivers of molten metal run through it. Up and down its waterways go the barges with coke, iron, coal. In and out of its mills, ranged along the waterways, go the long freights taking the products away. And always the fires of Pittsburgh flame against the sky.

But for all this panoply of fire, the visitor to Pittsburgh scarcely sees it. If you come down upon Pittsburgh by air it seems you are descending into the very pit of hell. If you pass through by train it seems you are passing through an endless workshop, furnace, inferno. But once you are in Pittsburgh down-town, you hardly see the flame. This is because the down-town district is the lowest part of the city, scarce above the level of the rivers. And the big buildings of down-town, the hotels, theatre buildings, and office buildings, blot out the view of the fire.

But the soul of the fire is there, the acrid smell of the chemicals, the smoke, the burnt, crusty faces of the buildings. And the denizens of the flame, the children of the inferno who serve this flame, they too are there, sometimes crude, dirty, misshapen, their faces and eyebrows singed by the flame, their hands grimy from big handlings.

On Sunday night the down-town district is practically deserted. Pittsburgh is a home city. In its growth of the last many years neighbourhood streets for shopping and entertainment have diverted the Pittsburgher's interest. On Sunday night, which is no-beer night in Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgher is most likely to be found in the communities of Greater Pittsburgh, in Homestead, Wilmerding, Squirrel Hill, Mill District. And the down-town, the Golden Triangle, as that part of the city is called, is left to strays, out-of-townners, soldiers, sailors, Marines, and a few girls picking them up.

Among the soldiers, sailors, and Marines cruising the down-town district on a Sunday night not long after Pearl Harbor was a tall young man whose name was Joe Drew. Joseph Arlington Drew, to be exact. He had straight dark hair, dark eyes in rather deep sockets, a longish nose, and a rather amused, brooding, jagged face.

He wore the dress uniform of the Marine Corps, the blue coat, the light blue trousers, the white hat. Though the dark eyes under the white visor seemed to have a particularly direct, hard look, and though he scanned the faces of passers-by, he was looking for no one in particular. He was saying goodbye to Pittsburgh. And to the memory of his father that lingered there.

He skirted then, not the most lighted streets, but the shadowy and drab and forbidding streets which led down to the river. He was seeking the flame, the flame that meant Pittsburgh to him, that meant his father.

For his father had lived and died by the flame. And by the eternal flame, as Joe Drew understood it, of man's hope, desire, accomplishment. His father had been an inventor, an inventor of aeroplanes, new metals, new methods of flight and manufacture.

Not that Pop started as an inventor. In Pop's own words, he had been "that standard figure, the great American mechanic." A job well done, a day's work for a day's pay. But Pop got the bug: make it better, make it fly. "A mechanic works on other

people's ideas," Pop used to say, "an inventor works on his own."

Well, when the bug bit Pop, it bit him hard. And right up on the old farm, at Mill Creek, Pop turned the old barn into a hangar, workshop, forge. And started to build 'em and fly 'em.

Did pretty good, too. Then Pop decided to come down to the city, push 'em over. Did pretty good, too. Then he ran up against Mr. Osmond and Three Mile Mill.

Mr. Osmond stole Pop's inventions. Which landed Pop "the other side of reason," as Uncle Charlie used to say. And, finally, Mr. Osmond had Pop locked up. Pop died in the nut-house, still trying to invent. And Mr. Osmond built a great empire, Three Mile Mill, Osmond Aeronautical, Osmond Enterprises, on Pop's inventions.

Joe Drew, the Marine, looking at the flames of Three Mile Mill, at the showers of sparks, felt his face and his soul singed by the flame. And by the flame of a burning resentment.

Well, goodbye, Pop. You were a great guy while it lasted. Osmond has the planes and the Government contracts and Three Mile Mill. But you had the ideas, Pop. You showed the way. You saw the Air Age when other guys were hitching buggies. So for my dough, the E flags over the Osmond plants, they're not for Osmond, Pop, they're for you.

Standing there, Joe Drew felt all this with particular acuteness. He had just come down from the old farm, from seeing Mom.

Mom was a looker. She was tall and thin, with black hair for all her fifty years, and big black eyes that seemed to spill out of a milky face. The one thing that always got him about Mom was how she and Pop ever went to bed. Probably he shouldn't think about things like that, but there you are.

Mom was difficult. She got that way, maybe, feeling herself a lady, a superior person, someone whose history went all the way back to the beginnings of America. And yet, who seemed to get so little out of it. Who worked her farm herself, and watered the animals, and barely managed to keep a leaky roof over her head.

Unfortunately, he and Mom were never close. That is, they were inside. Only it just didn't seem to come out.

After Pop died, and they didn't have any more money, Mom couldn't stand the city, and the lousy tenement where they lived. She went back to the farm. Her big black eyes kept looking at

him, asking something she couldn't say. Finally she said it. "Well," she said, "you're my only son."

He knew what she meant: Come back and farm with me. But he couldn't. Much as he loved the farm, much as he was scared of the depression, something about the city held him. Goddam, he was going to beat his way. He was going to make good. Not only for himself, but for Pop. And some day, by Christ, he was going to take Mr. Osmond down. And give Mom some of the things she should have had.

So he stayed in town, kicked around, lonely as a mule. Feeling himself too swell, inside, for the Polacks and mill hands he had come to know. Feeling himself not swell enough for any other kind, and not meeting them really. And scarcely scraping along, doing any kind of work, barge loading, punch press, W.P.A., even a stretch of C.C.C.

Then came the war, and he enlisted. He didn't know why. Just that he didn't like the lousy little yellow bastards bombing Pearl Harbor. Though one of the guys in the outfit said the Chinese were yellow too. O.K. What he didn't like were people who kicked people around. And he loved this country. Washington, Lincoln, that kind of stuff did something to him. So he enlisted.

He was going to write Mom. But they didn't write, somehow. Besides, he didn't know how she would take it. Then suddenly boot camp was over, he was a Marine, on leave, his last leave. And he beat it back to Pittsburgh, and up to Mill Creek where she lived.

He got a hitch out to the farm, and just walked up the lane. To that beautiful old stone house that looked like a museum, a ruined museum. Mom was pushing the lawn-mower. He would never forget how her hands dropped to her sides when she saw him. Her black eyes seemed to be spilling out of her face. Then she said it. "Your father went to the last one. I hoped you'd keep out of this." Well, that was Mom. She was a Quaker. But more than that. "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword." She really believed stuff like that. She had a deep-rooted, natural isolationism. She believed we ought to keep out of other people's wars. In fact, she believed it was a mad world, and that the only thing to do was keep out of it altogether.

Well, he hung around the farm. And fixed the old Ford up for her. And tried to make the few days nice. But it was no go.

Finally, he had to be on his way. Now, as he stood before the fires of Pittsburgh, he was saying his final goodbye. It was only a matter of hours and he would be on his way.

And looking into the flame—goodbye, Pop, he said.

He felt he had to get the resentment, the bitterness, out of his heart. But he felt a certain elation too. Goodbye, Pittsburgh, I'm through. Goodbye, you fires and mills. Goodbye, you rivers and bridges. Goodbye, you Nigger Hill and Polish Hill and all you other hills. Goodbye, you W.P.A., C.C.C., and F.O.B. I'm through, Pittsburgh, I'm free. From now on I'm from the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of . . .

He turned now to the more lighted streets. Soon he was at Fifth and Smithfield, the corner of Kaufmann's. And as Kaufmann's was something to him, having worked there one summer, he'd say goodbye to that too.

He walked along the lighted windows. Three girls were coming along. They were talking and laughing in that high, giggly way, as if to attract attention. And they were attracting it. It was sailor attention; there were several pairs of sailors.

The girls got to the sailors before the sailors could get to the girls. The first pair of gobs were sort of old, one had a belly. "Come on," one of the girls said; "we don't want old sailors, we want young sailors."

And they went toward another group of gobs. These gobs were young enough, but there were four of them. The girls, being three girls, wanted three gobs. "Listen," one of the girls said, "one of you sailors go home."

Joe Drew smiled. This was new stuff, girls telling sailors what to do. Still, why not, if they could get away with it?

Joe Drew, the Marine, stood looking on. The girls had their backs to him; they wore rather high skirts, the skirts swishing about their knees. The lights of Kaufmann's window fell upon their thin, prancing legs—that is, one of the girls had a hefty pair of gams, but the others were thin.

Now he saw one of the girls as she stood sideways. She was a tall girl, thin, with thin, beautiful legs. She had sudden breasts, straight yellow hair that hung down to her shoulders, pale, frosty blue eyes. She wore a little blue beret slanting down over one eye, almost into her cute little curly nose.

He knew her, Stell—Stella Witowski.

For a moment his mind went back to high school, that study period, when he was a senior and she was a soph. What he had studied in that study period was—her breasts. He couldn't help it, there was something just marvellous about 'em, from their first budding sprouts, till they made it, that semester, into something perfect, high, up, small, round and hard. Perhaps it was their perfect symmetry, perhaps it was the fascination of watching 'em grow, anyway they made him conscious for all time of the difference between men and women. He had seen a million of 'em since, but somehow hers remained in his mind. And there they were, as perfect, beautiful, fascinating as always. He knew a little more than that about 'em. In fact, he had almost—

He saw her now, about to move off with the sailors. "Stell," he said. "Stell."

She turned, recognizing him, looking at him the way she used to look at him in high school, her blue eyes in a blaze, and her little cherry lips parted. "Joe," she said in that slightly husky voice that always thrilled him. "Joe!"

"Hello, Stell."

"Hello, Joe."

One of the girls was coming after her. "Come on, Stell," she said. "What'll we do?"

"I don't know," Stell threw over her shoulder. "You fix it. I'm busy." Her eyes smiled up to him. "I am busy, huh, Joe?"

"You're busy," he said, smiling.

Fortunately, the girls and the sailors went away.

"Gee, Joe," she said, her hands touching his uniform, "I didn't know you were in. How long you been in, Joe?" But before he could answer, she put her hands on his chest, gave him a little push. "Let me look at you."

Her eyes swam at him. "Gee, you look great, Joe. Some Marine." He smiled. "You got a wonderful smile, Joe."

It was wonderful, she was thinking, his smile, his white teeth, he was a strong guy, clean. That's what you didn't get every day.

Jeez, she said to herself. "Where you going, Joe?"

"No place."

"What were you doing?"

"Watching you."

Her eyes drifted up to him in a guarded way. She took his arm, they walked along. "How long you been standing there?"

"Oh," he said, his eyes dark, measuring, amused. "Long enough."

She knew he had seen her picking up fellahs. "Don't be sarcastic," she said.

"What were you doing, Stell?"

She ran her tongue along her upper lip, her frosty blue eyes shot up at him. "Wolfing."

He liked the way she said it, just gave it to him—bang—as if to say: why not?

"How long you been doing it, Stell?"

She looked at him, rather pleased with herself, at the same time resenting his wanting to know. "Oh, some time."

They walked. "You remember the other dames?" she said. "Frieda Menkes and Harriet Walsh?"

He didn't, shook his head.

"They used to live around the block. You never noticed anybody," she said.

He remembered the peculiar misery of the neighbourhood. It was the worst time of the old man's life, and how quickly he had gotten old, you could see it coming on him . . . and his hallucinations at night, which went through the tenement . . . and the grocery bill they always owed Stell's father. Her old man kept a grocery store, a crummy little place, Witowski's, but they gave credit. And one day, when they had piled up a lot of credit, Mrs. Witowski, Stell's mother, asked Mom if Stell couldn't come and practise the piano. That's the way Stell took piano lessons, with a borrow of the piano. Even then he remembered her, her corn silk hair down her back, and her thin little legs hanging down under the piano bench. That was way before high school, she must have been nine or ten.

He remembered the piano, it had been bought for him, but he didn't want to play it. Finally, it had been given to the Witowskis for a grocery bill.

"You remember the piano?" she said.

He nodded.

"I always felt we shouldn'ta taken it," she said.

He smiled. "You couldn't do much about it," he said. "Mom insisted."

She nodded, as if granting there wasn't much to be done against his mother's insistence. He saw his mother's face for an instant,

pale, white, strained, with her black, insistent eyes. He knew why she had given up the piano; it was her way of levelling, giving up all pretence.

"You still got the piano?" he said.

She nodded.

"Your pa still got the grocery store?"

"No," she said. "He had to go back to the mill."

He nodded; it was the usual story in the neighbourhood: they took a little chance, tried to get going on their own, then the depression or something hit 'em and back to the mill. He said, "You working, Stell?"

She nodded. "At the Pittsburgh Store. Don't you remember?"

He remembered only too well. It was summer and he needed a job. Then one night she told him about one, in the stockroom. Later on he heard the previous stockroom boy had stuck his hand down her—

"How's your ma?" she said.

"O.K."

"Gee, she was a beautiful lady."

She wasn't beautiful, he thought, impressive. He thought he'd take a chance and say it. "Impressive."

She nodded, getting it.

They walked along. They were coming to Forbes Field, not far from Schenley Park. Whenever he walked with her, he thought, they just seemed to come this way.

He remembered the last time they had been here, about a year ago, and something almost happened. She had that thing, when she looked at him, when she let her feelings come out, that made him crazy for her. Even when she said, "Joe . . . Joe . . . Joe," each time she said it her eyes, her smile, made it say something else. He knew he could get tangled up with her, he had always known it, even in high school. And that night, almost a year ago, when they almost got into it, suddenly he got a flash: look out, kid, you'll get mixed up with her, you'll get in so deep there's no way out. Maybe he was a chump, but he had cooled off and not seen her since.

Her frosty blue eyes were fixed on him, "You remember, Joe?"

He nodded, he remembered.

"I always liked you, Joe."

He nodded, he knew, he had been that way about her too.

"What happened, Joe?"

He knew what she meant, why he had suddenly cooled off. Well, he couldn't tell her.

"You were afraid of getting tangled up with me." She was looking at him, her eyes accusing. "And I know why."

No, she didn't. Not in a million years.

"Because I'm a Polack."

She just gave it to him, like one to the jaw. What could he say? "Don't be sil," he said.

He was looking into her eyes. Jesus, her eyes. They were pale blue, frosty, but when the frost melted out they were like wild-flowers. . . . Suddenly he was kissing her. He felt it again, that little round jutting lower lip, he was nuts about it, he could bite it off. "Stell," he said, "Stell."

She threw her arms about him. . . . She could get me, he told himself, she could do it for keeps.

She kissed him so his lips buzzed. "There," she said. She shivered. She said, "You got it for me, Joe."

Christ, Jesus, if she throws any more at me . . . he steadied himself, took her hand, walked along, his shoulder brushing by some bushes. They were in Schenley Park.

They sat on a bench. He felt something of her come over him. Don't be a sucker, he said to himself, you don't wanna fall for this. Like she said, she's a Polack. What the hell do you want to fall for a Polack for? All right, she's got it, but what if? Play the game. Take it, and get set, from the Halls of Montezuma to the . . .

Those breasts. Christ. This is it.

She shudders a little and moves. O.K., kid, you're on. C'mere, Stell. Those lips. Christ, she gives it back to me. Her eyes are going glassy, her head goes this way and that . . . those lips, she's getting me nuts too.

"Stell," he said. "Stell."

She sighed. She was kissing him. His hand moved over her. "Don't," she said. He kept the hand still, then moved it down her throat. She straightened up a little, so it was harder to get the hand in. He wanted the hand in—— In.

"Oh," she said.

There was something about Stell, he thought, if she kissed you, if it was the real thing to her, the rest just came with it.

"Stell," he said, "Stell." Within himself he felt himself saying: I'm nuts about you. I'm nuts about the way you're skinny, then sudden like. The way your legs are skinny, then ain't. And your lips, with that sudden electricity. "Stell, Stell."

"Please," she said, "don't, please." But though he stopped his hand, it moved again, his senses began to buzz, he hardly knew what he was saying. "Please, Stell, please."

"Please," she said, "don't, please." He held her, wanting to hold her close, also wanting to keep her from squirming. "Please, Stell, please. . . ." She tossed her head this way and that, as if she were caught in an invisible cage.

"Please, I can't any more," she said, getting her hands free and holding his hands. Then she unwrinkled her skirt, he wrinkled it up again; she held his hands, clutching them to her breast.

He looked into her eyes, their eyes were so close, so close.

She shook her head, tried to get herself up, but he held her. This is it, something told him, you'll never get another, she's got something for you, you'll never get another like this.

"Stell," he said, "Stell." He was kissing her, she gently shaking her head as if to shake him off. Then it started again, he was kissing her, holding her, her head went back, his face went with hers, she was in his arms, lying across his lap, he holding her in his arms, looking down into her eyes, holding her to him—I can't, he said, I can't let her go, this is it, now.

The bushes were only a yard away.

"Please," she said. "Please." They were side by side, she was squirming, her head flung back and shaking from side to side, as if all of her, her body and soul were saying, No. But he didn't believe it, he knew it wasn't true, it had come over her now, he could tell by the way her hands held him, she was in it too. For a moment he looked up, looked around . . . nobody . . . just a few squares of light from the Schenley.

The Schenley.

He wondered where he would have taken her, if he was the kind of guy that took girls to hotels, if she was that kind of girl. Strangely enough, right above him, above these rustling trees, was the place where his father had sailed the airship, with Knabenshue, long ago.

He could almost hear it, it was part of the vibration, the vibration of the trees, of himself, of the world. . . . Stell, Stell, this is it.

They were leaving the park. He didn't say anything, she didn't say anything. He had met something there. Something that was——

Funny, it should strike him now, on a street corner in Pittsburgh, a thing a Marine in his company had said: "It can't be wrong if I like it so much." And stranger still was the echo of what she had said, after, when they were still on the grass, looking at each other, two cigarettes in the dark. "How are you, Stell?" he said.

And she said, "My back's wet, a little."

It seemed strange now, here on the street, as they walked along, she holding her little beret in her hand, the wind wisping her thin blonde hair about her.

"What time is it?" she said.

He looked at his watch. Good Christ—three. Three o'clock in the morning. The strains of the waltz went through him. Well, this was some waltz, brother. . . . He showed her the watch.

"Gee willikins," she said. And looking up at him, "Hello, Joe." "Hello, Stell."

She put a wisp of her hair over her face, keeping her hand there, giving him the eye. "Remember me?"

He nodded, smiled.

"Well, come on," she said, "give us a kiss."

He did, but he felt something funny: gee, kissing her right on the street. It was strange, he thought, how moral you get, hot and cold. Some kiss, but not like the others, the buzz was gone, his lips felt numb. You done a night's work, brother, he said to himself.

She was looking at him. "When will I see you, Joe?"

He felt like a heel. "Look, Stell, I guess I shoulda told you——" "What?"

"You're not going to see me."

She looked at him. "You're not married?"

He shook his head.

"Engaged?"

He shook his head.

"Going steady?"

"No."

"Then why not?"

He looked at her, the way the corn silk hung around her lovely face, those little lips that had cherry lipstick on again, those blue,

frosty eyes that wanted to believe in him. . . . Jesus Christ, he was thinking, it's her first time. I didn't know. A girl that was wolfing. How should I know? But there it was. Her first. And now I gotta tell her—

"Stell," he said, "I'm going away."

"Going away!" She indicated his uniform. "You mean that?"

He nodded, he meant that.

"You mean you're going to be a Marine?" She waved her hand as if to say: out there?

He nodded.

"And that's all," she said; "there's nothing else?"

He smiled, shook his head, there was nothing else.

"When?" she said.

"To-night."

He could see she didn't believe him, she made a gesture, a drop of her hand, as if to say: don't hand me that, you ain't going away to-night.

"This is it, Stell," he said.

Her hands raised in incomprehensibility. How could it be to-night. "Just like that?" she said.

He nodded.

"What time?"

He looked at his watch. "In about an hour."

The blue blaze in her eyes calmed down a little, but it was plain she didn't really believe him.

"You want to come and see?"

Suddenly her eyes lighted up. "Could I?"

"Sure."

"Where?"

"Pennsy Station."

"But," she said, "maybe there's somebody else."

"No," he said, "there's nobody else."

"Your mother?"

"I said goodbye to her already."

"Then you wouldn't mind, Joe?"

"Let's go, baby!"

"I'd love to see you off, Joe." She came up to him, put her hands on him. "I'll see you off, Joe, as if you were the only man in the world."

He hailed a taxi. They whizzed back the way they had come,

she in his arms. They went by the down-town district, now the few blocks to the station, up the cobbled incline of the station. "Come on, baby," he said. "I checked my stuff." He grabbed her hand, they ran to the baggage counter.

He got his stuff, then they had to run for the gate. She clung to him, found herself crying. He said, "Don't cry, baby."

All around there were Marines and girls, Marines and girls, the girls crying and the Marines saying, "Don't cry, baby."

"All aboard!"

"Let's go, men!"

"Goodbye, baby."

It was their last gasp, then he flung out of her arms. He was running for the train and waving, other Marines were running and waving, the last she saw was the piping on his coat, that little stream of red piping, then a trouser leg with a stripe, but she couldn't be sure, maybe it was somebody else's trouser, somebody else's stripe.

And that was all.

CHAPTER II

THE FAMILY WITOWSKI

As STELLA WALKED THE mean streets from the station, she felt a strange lack of fear. She was ordinarily not a fearful girl, but she knew these mean, narrow streets were amongst the worst in Pittsburgh. Now and again a drunk lurched near her, or some early-morning lecher on his prowl, but she passed along, somehow indifferent, filled with a strange new ease.

So she passed through the warehouse district and the Negro district, and rather than wait at this hour for the incline (a strange, crude, narrow car that hauled people up the hill) she started up the winding steps, cut in the side of the city, that wound up to Polish Hill.

She stopped for a moment before Our Lady, thinking of what she had done. As she came to the Polska Apteka she stopped by the window. Under the bluish light of the street lamp she could see something she had seen there before—a whirling spray.

A whirling spray—— Stella was not an unknowing girl; how

could she be? The face of the city bloomed with whirling sprays, contraceptives lined the counters of drug-stores and ten-cent stores. Stella would have had to be blind, nay blind and deaf, not to have known about these things.

She looked at the whirling spray. Of course, the store was closed; still, she could get it in a few hours.

As she got to the building where she lived, she thought of taking her shoes off, sneaking in. But somehow she felt it beneath her.

Something had struck her—she was in no way ashamed. She had always loved Joe Drew, always wanted to be his girl, his wife. Thank God, it was Joe.

She let herself in. Fortunately, her father and mother were still asleep. Not that she cared, but it was better this way. No argument.

She was in her own room now, tired, but strangely awake. She thought of the other girls, Frieda Menkes and Harriet Walsh, who went wolfing with her. How had they made out?

As for the girls, Frieda had. Harriet had not.

Why? And why did I?

I guess I never met a fellah like Joe. Jeez, I'm crazy about him. Joe.

What'm I gonna do?

She knew it was not too late. And she didn't need a whirling spray; anything would do, mostly. She could sneak into the bathroom, right now.

The thought held her, fascinated. And a little dazed. There was life, life inside.

Maybe she was just kidding herself.

If it had been anyone else but Joe—it couldn't be—but if it had, you know what you'd do. And fast. What are you waiting for? In a little while the old man'll be up.

For a moment she saw her father, his long underwear, his swarthy face, the long, drooping moustaches.

She had to do something. Then she knew. She didn't want to. She knew all about girls who had babies, and got thrown out of the house, and what the neighbours said.

But she didn't care. That is, she did care, but she knew she'd come out, somehow.

She heard her father getting up, clumping around—hurry up, kid, it's your last chance.

Something told her not to. She went to bed.

All through the day, at the Pittsburgh Store, behind the perfumes and lotions, she thought about it. She was on the point, several times, of saying something about it to Yetta Malinski and Harriet Walsh. They were wise dames, they would know what to do.

Then she would say to herself: don't be sil.

By which she meant that nothing had happened to her, nothing would happen to her, she was romancing herself, she wasn't going to have a baby.

And what if she did? Of course it was wrong. But what if she did?

And then she knew. A month, two months, that slightly sick feeling in the morning, and she knew. Of course she still could do something about it, but the thought was disgusting to her. She knew now, she realized now, that from the very first, from the time she had stood outside the Polska Apteka, a strange desire had taken hold of her, she wanted the baby.

Why she wanted it she could not say. Sometimes she thought it was for Joe, he was a Marine, he might die, the baby would be all that was left of him. But this, she told herself, was not the real reason. Even her love of him was not the whole reason. She had discovered something with the quickening of life in her, she wanted the baby for herself.

She saw now the place the baby would have in her life. Stella loved her family, yet couldn't stand them. The great department store with its throngs and the cling of the cash registers and the pop of the tubes was the music of life to her, yet she yearned for something else.

She knew if she didn't get out of her environment, she would sooner or later be fated to the kind she didn't like, a Polish mill hand or an Irish wagon boy.

The baby loomed now as something to live for, someone to live with, even if she didn't get Joe. She would take the baby and go away. She did not know where, she had never been anywhere. But one place kept occurring to her, New York. Not from what she knew about it, she knew nothing about it, except from the movies—that stock shot of Broadway, as seen through the back window of a taxi. The lights, the theatres, the people. Besides, Stella had a small voice, she fancied herself a singer, she went

about the house "trucking" and singing songs. Possibly she could get a job in a café or some musical show. Maybe, like the girl in the theatrical pictures, she could be the understudy, opening night the star would break a leg. And she would live in an apartment, with her baby, and fight her way up.

Her baby, Joe's baby!

Joe. A rhythm beat in her. Joe. I love you, Joe. Of course it isn't regular love, it isn't the way it ought to be. But oh you Joe. I love your smile, Joe, with the white teeth. I love your straight black hair, the way it wisps around. I love your dark eyes. Way deep in, you think about something I don't know anything about, I feel it, Joe. And I love the way you went to war, enlisted. And maybe I'm a little struck on you because your father and mother were swell. Of course, your father—— But it's you, Joe, you.

Unfortunately she had no one to talk to, so she talked to herself. She wished she could have someone to talk to, like in the movies. You could go to that kind older fellah (Warner Baxter, Roland Young) who was your great friend. He might make a little pass at you, but he wouldn't after he saw how you felt about it. Or you were one of those girls in the movies who had a beautiful, understanding mother (Fay Bainter). Well, that's not my ma. My ma is——

She knew what her mother was, the Obstacle. For all her resolution, Stella knew she wasn't ready to go away yet. And she knew what her toughest moment would be, when her mother got "wise."

It happened on a Sunday. You can say all you like, she thought, about how swell it is to have a day off on Sunday, but it makes it a long day.

All through the day her mother looked at her belly, then into her eyes. It was a one-two: into the belly and into the eyes. Even when the old lady bent over the stove, basting the Sunday dinner, the look went sideways, into the belly and into the eyes.

Her mother was an old Polish woman, not so old maybe, but she looked old. And homely. Though there was something sweet about her. Her face was the colour of the Polish earth she was always talking about, sorta brown. Her eyes were large and grey-blue, like clouds and snow. Weather eyes. And between the eyes a sunken nose that suddenly pugged out. Like plenty Polish people had.

Not that she herself had anything against Polish people, but in a strange way she had. That is, when they wanted to stay Polish, like her father.

Her father was of medium height, swarthy, with big sad brown eyes and long drooping moustaches. He never said anything. He could sit the whole evening and not say anything. He was a great newspaper reader. He would read the Polish papers. Once in a while he went to a Polish movie. Stella resented this. It wasn't that she didn't love her father or Polish people, but holy gee, this is the United States.

On Sunday her father would go to church and sit around the house and sleep. Then around five o'clock he would go down to the corner and smoke a cigar. It was his sport for the week. And on the corner, with other Polish mill-workers like himself, he would stand around talking. Though he was Polish in everything else, his pride made him talk English, but it was a funny kind.

Now he said, "I go corner, smoke tzigar." And he went, clumping, as he always did.

Her mother looked at her, her grey-blue eyes like hail. "Well, Amerikanska," she said (it was her term of mockery, disapproval, derision), "I see you learned Amerikanska tricks."

Stella was going to say these tricks were known in other places, but she let it go.

"Well, Amerikanska, say something."

Stella shrugged, what was there to say?

Mrs. Witowski looked at her, those long skinny legs, the thin behind; it was a wonder she could have one at all. She said, "Who is the father?"

Stella merely gave her the blue eyes.

"At least, Amerikanska, tell me, you know who the father is?"

Stella nodded, she knew.

"Then who is he?"

Stella shook her head, she wouldn't tell.

Mrs. Witowski knew all about how girls foolishly protect men. She said, "He's a Polish boy?"

Stella shook her head—no.

So he wasn't a Polish boy, that made it harder. A Polish boy, like his father and grandfather, might do something like this, but a marriage could be arranged. But with others—

"What is he?"—accusingly—"Amerikanski?"

Stella nodded.

"Do I know him?"

This was far-fetched, the old lady knew so few American boys. But she did know this one, Stella was thinking, years ago. However, it was too much to go into, she shook her head.

"Will he marry you?"

Stella shrugged, she didn't know.

The wrinkles on Mrs. Witowski's forehead deepened. The skin of her forehead seemed to go white. You could see the white skin under the pale sandy hair. "He's married?"

Stella shook her head.

Mrs. Witowski had a good question. "Tell me, Stella," she said, "are you a good girl?"

Stella nodded.

Mrs. Witowski breathed a sigh. If it was true, if Stella was a good girl, barring this, there was some chance.

She said, "You love him?"

Stella just looked at her. Mrs. Witowski saw those eyes come into a frosty blaze.

All right, Mrs. Witowski thought, she loves him. She didn't know what good it did, but she loved him. She said, "Tell me, Stella, where is he?"

"I don't know."

Mrs. Witowski looked at her sharply. "What do you mean, you don't know?"

"He's a soldier."

My God, a soldier. An Amerikanski soldier. What was the use—she might as well have stayed in Poland for all the use it was, and her daughter been had by some German. Still, it wasn't as bad as that. "Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"He's left town?"

Stella nodded.

"When will he be back?"

Stella shrugged, she didn't know.

"You don't know much about him, do you, Amerikanska?"

Stella looked at her, her eyes cold again. She shook her head—no, she didn't know much about him.

"How could you, Amerikanska, how could you?" Then Mrs. Witowski compressed her thin lips, as if to keep herself from saying

foolish things. She knew how girls could, the world was full of girls and soldiers.

The thing to do, she was thinking, was go to Mary Janushek, the neighbourhood midwife, who brought them into the world, and also—— “How far along are you?” she said, with an appraising eye. “Three-four months?”

Stella nodded, three-four months.

“Amerikanska,” Mrs. Witowski said, “since you know some Amerikanska tricks, have you thought of some others? There are ways, you know.”

Stella’s blue eyes just stared at her. Mrs. Witowski said, “I’ll take you.”

Stella merely stared, shook her head.

“You mean you won’t go?”

Stella nodded.

“Why not?”

Stella just looked at her.

“You mean you want it?”

Stella nodded.

Mrs. Witowski’s jaw dropped. It was a heavy, stony jaw, little pock-marks on it, as if chipped by life. She had had a mild case of smallpox in Poland, long ago.

“Now listen to me, Amerikanska, you’ll do something about it.”

Stella was looking at her. She wouldn’t do anything about it, she was thinking, wild horses couldn’t make her. “And you a good Catholic,” she said.

Mrs. Witowski was a good Catholic, but she knew this was just to put her off. “Please,” she said.

Stella shook her head.

“Why?”

Stella looked at the wall, at the window, trying to find something to say. She started several times, then facing her mother: “I can’t,” she said.

Can’t. How do you like it, can’t? You can stick your legs up, Mrs. Witowski was going to say. You can let some soldier plug you. You can look me in the eye about it, you can just stand there with your rouged lips and your yellow hair hanging down in that abandoned Amerikanska way, you can bring shame on us, but——

She decided to say none of these things. An old wisdom told

her something: don't make it worse. So she resigned herself, at least seemingly. She said, "What will I tell your father?"

Stella shrugged, she didn't know. She knew this would be difficult. But she also knew her mother could handle him. Between the two of them, her mother was the one who had the final say.

She looked at her mother, the dark face, the thin flat lips, the grey-blue eyes like hail. "I'm sorry, Ma, I wouldn'ta done it, except—" She knew this was useless. Mrs. Witowski was wiping away her tears with her apron, the proud, fresh Sunday apron—never, she used to say, no matter how poor, did I wear a dirty apron on Sunday. "Please, Ma," Stella said, "I'll do the best I can. And you do what you can with Pa."

Mrs. Witowski nodded, she would try. She could control him, mostly. But this was something about which a man raged; he might kick his daughter out of the house. "I don't know," she said. "What will you do if he just won't take it?"

"I'll go," said Stella, her eyes flashing.

Mrs. Witowski looked at her daughter. She knew her daughter's song: I earn my own way and I don't take nothin' from nobody.

Up the stairs they heard that clump, clump . . . Mr. Witowski was coming. "Go to your room," said Mrs. Witowski. "I'll tell him."

But Stella, usually so direct, said, "Please, Ma, wait a few days. What's the hurry?"

What do you want to wait for? Mrs. Witowski thought. But she agreed. She waited a few days. Then something happened that made her feel she could wait no longer. It happened in the grocery store, which had been her grocery store—ah, there she had given Stella piano lessons, there she had come into possession of a piano for an unpaid grocery bill, there she had known that strange man with his inventions, and that very proper woman who was so genteel with the Polish people. . . .

The grocery store was full of ghosts. And then she realized a new ghost was there, the ghost of an unborn thing, Stella's baby. She could see it in the women's eyes. Then Mrs. Plocki gave it to her.

"Well, Mrs. Witowski," Mrs. Plocki said, "I see a little angel is coming to your house."

Mrs. Witowski just looked at her. Mrs. Plocki had a sister, according to neighbourhood gossip, who ran a house in Scranton.

But that didn't seem to make her any kinder. Mrs. Witowski fumbled with her ration book. "I'll have two pounds beef," she said, pointing to a slab of round steak on the counter. She would have to tell Mr. Witowski.

It was evening, after the evening meal. Wenceslaus was at the kitchen table in shirtsleeves, reading the Polish paper. His sleeves were rolled up to where his striped underwear showed, his collar was open at the throat, his two heavy misshapen, never very clean hands were at the sides of his face, supporting it. The soft yellow light of the oil lamp suffused his face.

Mrs. Witowski, from the sink where she was washing the dishes, looked at him. She could see his bald spot, from the crown of his head down to his bushy eyebrows. His long moustaches hung down to the paper—ah, Wenceslaus, Wenceslaus, you were young. You had yellow hair, that is so dark now, and streaked with grey. And a bald spot. Who would have thought, Wenceslaus, when you were a peasant boy in Poland? And now you're an old man, you work so hard, and I have to tell you——

She shook her head. Stella was in her room, pretending to have a headache.

"Wenceslaus," Mrs. Witowski said, "don't you ever notice anything?" She spoke in Polish, the language in which they had dignity, understanding. "Don't you see?"

He looked at her. And in English, "See? What to see?" he said. He looked about the kitchen, thinking she might have a new apron, a new pot. These, in the past, had been things to "see."

"All the neighbours see," she said.

Neighbours? Was she crazy? "You got something talk—talk," said he.

"Wenceslaus, do you ever look at our Stella?"

Stella? His daughter? "Sure, some time look." His brown eyes were beginning to get worried. "Stella? What matter Stella?"

"You see nothing, Wenceslaus?" she pleaded. "There is nothing about her, no change?"

Change? What change could be? Of course, Stella not come to table, not eat to-night. Goddam, could this be—only one thing could be, with girl. But not Stella.

"Goddam," he said, "what is?" Goddam was not swearing to him, it was merely English, American, the language of the land

as it came to him. "Come on," he said, getting excited, "you got something say, come on, goddam, say."

"Wenceslaus," she said, "our Stella is going to have a baby."

Have baby! He reared up as if stuck from behind by a bayonet. Goddam, sonbitch, have baby. "Who's faller?" And he began rushing down the hall toward Stella's room, Mrs. Witowski following him.

He banged open the door, looked at his daughter, expecting to see a great big belly, but there it was, just a little rise, he demanding now, "Who's faller, who's faller?"

Stella just shook her head. He put his crude misshapen hands on her, started to shake her. "Goddam, you tell me who faller is, I keel." He started shaking her and slapping her.

Yes, yes, thought Mrs. Witowski, they always yell about killing the fellah, then they start killing the girl. "No, no, Wenceslaus," she shouted, rushing in, shaking him, pulling him away. "What do you want to do? You'll treat her that way and she'll leave. Then what will she be?"

Wenceslaus looked at his wife with angry, melancholy eyes. A thought formed in him: what is she now? But he said nothing. In truth, he was glad he had slapped her, glad Mrs. Witowski had dragged him off. Goddam, is no good, what you do—— He clumped out.

In her sixth month, Stella quit her job. By now her condition was quite well known, in the department store, in the neighbourhood. But Stella, with a fixed purpose, with a fixed destiny she had appointed for herself, kept her eyes straight ahead. She was going to bring life into the world. And the thought gave her a dignity beyond any concern for what anyone might think.

Her father, after weeks of brooding, was kindlier, and hesitant and shy when he asked her how she was. It was quite remarkable, she thought, nothing else had ever made him inquire.

And Mrs. Witowski was very solicitous, saying maybe they should go out of town, to a Polish maternity place in Erie. But Stella wouldn't have it. It was her baby, and she wanted it her way.

She had already booked a room in a small maternity hospital, and paid the down payment.

"I'll buy you the baby things," Mrs. Witowski said.

But Stella wouldn't have that either. "It's my baby," she said. "I want to pay for it myself." And so she did, taking some money out of the bank, and going shopping for the layette.

Then she went to Father Tadeusz, told him all about it, asked him to baptize the baby.

Now she had one more thing to do: she had to write Joe. It pained her, for she had not heard from him. She had written a number of times, addressing her letter to Joseph Arlington (she was glad she remembered the Arlington) Drew, care of the Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. And received no reply. She did not know whether he was in this country or abroad. Or whether he was alive or dead.

Now she wrote again:

"DEAR JOE,—As you will know by my previous letters, if you got them, I have written before. I don't know whether you got them, Joe. Or whether you just didn't want to answer. If that's the way you feel, Joe, it's all right with me. (I mean I'm trying like hell, Joe, it should be all right.) For I love you. But now I've got something more to tell you, something I didn't say before. I didn't want to say it till I just had to, Joe.

"I'm going to have a baby. To tell you the whole truth, Joe, I am having the baby, a little, because of you. But mostly for myself. Because you are the man I love. And I really always wanted a baby by you.

"Though you don't owe me anything, Joe. Just a letter, saying you're all right.

"All my love,

"STELL."

Some time later she wrote another letter:

"DEAR JOE,—Well, I've had the baby. In case you didn't get my other letters, Joe, it's your baby.

"And Joe, it's the most beautiful baby in the world. I can't say he looks exactly like you, Joe. He sorta looks like you and me.

"And Joe, like I said, you don't owe me anything. Only for God's sake, Joe, if you're still alive, write us a letter.

"All my love,

"STELL."

She now lived quite alone with her baby. The baby's crib was in her room. On her dresser, with the powder, the rouge, the perfume, was the baby's dusting powder and formula. Next to the dresser, under the picture of the Virgin, was the baby's bath.

Stella loved being a mother, and found it very easy. They made so much of it, she thought, but all you had to do was feed it and love it and keep it clean and it was the most smiling and beautiful baby in the world.

And sometimes she sang to it. Not that old Polish stuff. But sometimes, thinking of his father, and getting a little sad because she had not heard from him, and thinking of the baby's uncertain position in the world:

*Then you are my Melancholy Baby,
Melancholy Baby . . . don't you cry. . . .*

And sometimes, holding the baby on her knee, and pretending he had climbed up there himself:

*Climb up on my knee, Sonny Boy.
Though you're only three (three weeks), Sonny Boy,
You've no way of knowing,
I've no way of showing
What you mean to me, Sonny Boy. . . .*

Sometimes her mother, hearing her sing such songs, would come into the room, just stand there, questioning with cloudy eyes. "Stella," she would say, "is this the kind songs to sing to a baby?"

Stella merely shrugged.

"Stella," her mother said, "I'd like to talk to you."

Stella knew what this was about, a new bee had come into her mother's bonnet. "Stella," her mother said, "when are you going for the compensation?"

Stella knew what her mother meant. "Compensation" had to do with the city in which they lived. Pittsburgh was a forest of industrial casualties. In no other town in the world could you see so many men with arms and legs cut off, with skin scarred by the acid and the flame.

If a man lost an arm or a leg, there was compensation. This, to Mrs. Witowski, was the difference between Poland America; in America there was compensation. If a man lost his job there

was compensation, only it was called relief, W.P.A. If a boy went to war and was killed, there was compensation, only it was called insurance. And if a girl had a baby, there were a few dollars to be had.

Moralists may wonder whether or not money can make up for a broken back or a girl's "trouble." Mrs. Witowski often wondered about it. But she knew that with thinking you could go crazy. But if you got compensation, at least there was some money. In this way the money became the ultimate morality. There was no accident in Mill District but sooner or later people said, "Did he get compensation?"

The neighbourhood morality was being forced upon Mrs. Witowski. The women in the grocery store had advanced from the "little angel" talk to the ultimate consideration. "Mrs. Witowski," they said, "did Stella get compensation?"

This meant more than money; it meant: did Stella know the name of the father? For without the father's name, there was no compensation.

Mrs. Witowski knew that once there was compensation, that would be the end of it, the neighbourhood morality would be satisfied. By that time some other girl would be in trouble, and the heat would be on elsewhere. But Mrs. Witowski had another reason for persisting, a deeper and more vengeful reason. The soldier, why should he, like all men, have his fun and go free? Why shouldn't he pay for the baby's upkeep, at least something? And also, many a man, faced with having to pay for the baby, thought it cheaper and better to marry the girl.

Mrs. Witowski did not wish to make her daughter unhappy, and she was fearful of driving her too far, yet she could not give up on compensation. Therefore, every other day now, "Stella," she said, "when are you going for the compensation?"

Stella knew she had to have this out sooner or later. And finally, facing her mother, "I'm not going, Ma."

"But why," Mrs. Witowski said, "why?"

Stella had a reason, but she couldn't say it. It isn't a compensation baby, she said to herself, it's a love baby.

"Stella," her mother said, her cloudy eyes shining with a kindly, careworn concern, "have I been so bad to you?"

"No, Mom," Stella said, appreciating yet dreading this kindlier approach, "you've been very good."

"Has your father been so bad to you?"

No, Stella was thinking, he had been very kind.

Mrs. Witowski came to the most delicate part of it. "Stella," she said, her eyes beaming appealingly, "you do know the name of the father?"

Stella didn't get angry. "Yes, Ma," she said, "I know him very well."

"Well, then, please," Mrs. Witowski said, "go for the compensation."

Stella found herself beginning to give in. Not for her mother's sake. Or because of the neighbours. But because she hadn't heard from Joe. If she did as her mother said, went to the authorities, gave his name, at least she could find out whether he was alive or dead.

"I don't know where to go, Ma," she said.

"The Squire," Mrs. Witowski said, "you know, Mr. Pike."

This was the great man of Mill District, the political leader, the headman. Everybody in Mill District knew of "Stoney" Pike, the Squire. As a matter of fact, Stella remembered that he had helped her father years ago.

Maybe she could find out about Joe.

"All right, Ma," she said. "I'll go."

Thus it was on a bright afternoon in March that Stella could be seen going down the main street of Mill District. In her arms was her baby, wrapped in a blue blanket. In her heart was the desire to satisfy her mother, and to find out something about the man she loved.

CHAPTER III

SQUIRE PIKE

J. STONEHAM PIKE, or "Stoney" Pike as he was more popularly known, was the Squire of Mill District. Or to put it more plainly, the Alderman and Justice of the Peace. Stella was not going to him merely because her mother had suggested it, and because she wanted to find out about Joe, but because going to him was the custom, the thing to do in her district. If you

wanted a marriage licence, or if you were given a dispossess notice, or if you were somehow in trouble, you went to "Stoney" Pike. He was a man of legendary proportions. Her father not only had been helped by him, but she had heard of various girls, left with babies, who had gone to him. He was "The Squire."

The starting point of the Squire's power was that all legal cases, from spitting on the sidewalk to disorderly conduct and murder, were first brought before him. These cases he heard, or dismissed, or set bail for, or bound over to a higher court. In other words, he was a magistrate of low degree.

If your husband beat you and you wanted a divorce, you could go before the Squire and he would help you make out an "Information." For which he charged a small fee. He could fine people, assess costs, issue warrants, subpoenas, set a hearing, a continuance, a discontinuance, for most of which he charged a small fee.

This was his legal domain. But "Stoney" Pike, like many a Pittsburgh Squire, had an illegal domain.

J. Stoneham Pike was a tall man, slightly stooped, with broad shoulders. He had a long, bony face, a long, bony nose, and eyes grey and unrevealing as oysters.

He was a man of about fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven, he did not himself know, having been born in the backwoods, and there being something irregular about his birth.

He had come to the city a long time ago, been a mill foreman, entered the world of politics.

In due time he was elected Squire. He was a man of much more ability, flavour, and sense than the average Squire. He was a man of considerable self-education, he had read Blackstone while working as a barge hand and a mill hand. Many people had predicted a great future for him. It was said he could have been Mayor, Governor even.

And then something happened. Stoney had an emotional accident, a thing he rarely thought about these days. But he could remember, there had been a time in his life when he had to choose between good and evil. And he had chosen. Once in a great while he thought of what he had heard an actor say from Shakespeare, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves."

Specifically, behind the mask of his office, Stoney was a racketeer. His rackets, these days, included the Numbers Racket. And the

Night Numbers. For, as Stoney said to his constables and on-hangers, "A good business works twenty-four hours a day."

Not that Stoney was interested in money. He wasn't, to any great extent. But he wanted to "Keep the hand in." He was jealous of his pre-eminence, his overlordship, his political power. It was to keep his status that he kept these things going, that he kept on making money for "the boys," though, of course, he got his cut. But "the boys" were important to him on election day, in getting out the vote, in re-electing him, in bringing him strange oddments of information that floated through Mill District. He knew very nearly everything about everybody, so that in his dealings with people he could play one against the other, "both ends against the middle," as he called it, himself coming out on top. It was, in essence, a system of blackmail, and so effective was it, and so strong Stoney's personal power, that he could blackmail, not merely individuals, but street-car companies and mills.

It may be wondered why a great mill like Three Mile Mill, three miles down the river, with E flags all over, would want to have anything to do with such a man. It was not merely Stoney's old acquaintanceship around the mill, or his putting in a word here or there and having the mill's taxes reduced—but Stoney prevented strikes.

This was not a matter of strikes in wartime, but just plain ordinary strikes. Strike—the word came to him before it came to Three Mile Mill, out of the whore-houses it came to him, out of the short-weight butcher shops, out of the saloons. Strike!

Stoney would put on his "iron hat," as he called his derby, his long black frayed coat (he was always careful not to be seen, in Mill District, in elegant vestments) and over to Three Mile Mill he would go. And there he be closeted with Stan Murcheson or Harper Donahue of the Legal Department.

Sometimes the great mill didn't care whether there was a strike or not. At such times "Stone," as he was sometimes called, became the people's advocate, the people's friend. "Why, they can't get away with that," he would say, referring to the wages or working conditions.

But suppose the mill wanted no strike at this time. And some particular "agitator" was becoming persuasive. Stoney had the man locked up, sometimes placed in an outlying police station, sometimes not booked, so that the man, for all his friends and

followers knew, just disappeared, was just one of those irresponsible characters—"Here to-day and gone to-morrow" Stone would say.

Of course, the law says you can only lock a man up for cause, and only keep him locked up a certain length of time, but that is just the law. When Stoney wanted a man locked up he had him locked up. And the man could be held a good long time, particularly if the right people wanted him held.

But this matter of preventing strikes was of no moment to Stoney during the war. During the war, Stone, like an astute man, played the rackets of the war. It always amazed him that people did not see what was coming. "The lazy colon," as he called the human mind, rarely seemed to work. People thought, or must have thought, they could have the war and all the things that went before the war. War produced shortages, and Stone saw the shortages coming. And like a "smart cookie" he cornered a considerable number of tyres. He organized a black market in gas stamps. His old truckers, from the days of Prohibition, were out roaming the countryside, buying up a beef or a pig, slaughtering it in some garage or warehouse, peddling it to the short-weight butcher shops, which became Stone's black-market butcher shops.

One racket Stoney steered clear of, a good old standby of the Squires, the prostitution racket. Like all low-lifers, Stoney needed something to be superior to. He had a hatred, a terrible contempt of pimps, though he used them for electioneering. And so too the whores, though he voted them in droves, he really wanted nothing to do with them personally, and no share of their earnings. (He had a horror of venereal disease, based on a misadventure of early life.) No, he wanted nothing to do with whores. It was another sort of woman he was interested in.

Stone's greatest racket was preying on female flesh. Disappointed in his own love life, he preyed upon everybody else's. He was, in a strange, sadistic way, a lover of women. The female form had entrancements for him he simply could not get over. Nor was it always an ideal form: sometimes it was a big butt, sometimes it was the straight, columnar legs leading up to faint breasts, sometimes it was great breasts splashing down to incredibly thin ankles . . . whatever it was, it was something to Stone.

He would see a woman in the neighbourhood, not always a young woman, it might be a big woman or a tiny woman; it did

not matter to him, he liked all kinds. Sometimes it was merely that he didn't like her husband.

Whatever it was, he decided he wanted the woman. More often than not she was a married woman. Stoney preferred it, less trouble usually, and easier to get.

For his method had little to do with the woman. It was the wives of millworkers upon whom he largely preyed; he bluntly told the woman what he wanted, and when the woman said no, Stoney did something very simple. He called up the mill, and had the woman's husband laid off.

Then he would send the lawyer in his office (his legal mask) or some other subordinate, or himself tell the woman that her husband could go back to work only if she gave in.

Very often the woman gave in. For Stoney did these things not merely in the burgeoning period of the war, when jobs were easy to get, but before the war and during the depression, when a job was life and——

The simple truth is many a woman gave in.

People may say the Squire system is rotten, or any system that allows for such perversion of political power. Yes, many people have thought so. And people may say: if it is so rotten, what keeps it going?

It was kept going by a system of small favours. Should Mrs. Keary's boy, or Mrs. Pasquali's boy, steal a package off a wagon, Stoney could do something about it, he had connections. He could call the department store, or the judge before whom the case was brought, or, if it came to the worst, in more serious crimes he could reach the Pardon Board. And under extreme circumstances, he might even wangle a stay of execution.

For Stoney was part of a great political machine; rarely did he call on it, and never did it interfere in his own ward, his bailiwick, but in truth Stoney sometimes could very nearly have swung a national election. Not that he ever did, he swung exactly 16,000 votes, and what with various deals and what he had on some of the more stupid Squires, he often swung a good deal more. But Stoney was sure of 16,000 votes, and he could throw them one way or the other, like throwing a switch, and he could throw them up to a late hour on election night.

That often affected the results in Allegheny County, which was Pittsburgh with some surrounding suburbs and hills. And

Allegheny County, which Abraham Lincoln had called "the State of Allegheny," counted heavily in Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania was one of the big states in the nation.

Who would think it, that this crude, lewd man, a small-time Squire, out of a dirty, ignorant mill and slum district, could have such influence?

And as for the man Stoney—was there no good in him at all? Strangely enough, there was. As he walked the dirty streets of his kingdom, for he looked upon it as such, as he saw the river with its steel company barges, the mills by the river—as he beheld the shopping street near the mill, and the hill rising from the shopping street to the flats and tenements, with the car of the "incline" swaying over all (this being not merely the crude topography of his district, but of most Pittsburgh mill districts)—as Stoney looked upon all this, he felt not only that it was his kingdom, but that he took care of it in a certain way.

For in his kingdom no hungry or needy ever went hungry or needy before Christmas, except for a few Bohunk Socialists or old-time Americans who slammed the door in his face. But as for the rest, with his constables around, his ward chairmen and district leaders, he set out the day before Christmas in the vans the moving companies were forced to contribute, these vans now full of turkeys, potatoes, bread, cranberries, celery . . . the backs of the vans now open on street corners, the poor crowding around, some of Stoney's fuglemen taking baskets up to the bedridden in the tenements. Stoney would look on, his derby off, his long, bony head bared to the night, his wiry hair close-cropped over his skull, his face seamed and lined, his grey eyes red-rimmed, like oysters faintly rimmed with catsup (he had conjunctivitis, made somewhat worse by tipling)—so he would stand looking on at the troubles of humanity, and something vaguely approximating the Christmas spirit would touch him, he himself now lending a hand, hauling a basket off the van, and saying, "How many children you got, lady?"

"Four."

. Jesus Christ, four children, and nothing in the house. "Here, Charlie," he would say to one of his fuglemen, "give the poor lady another bunch of celery." But Charlie, Buster, or Greeny being otherwise occupied or too slow, Stoney would rip open the celery crate with his own hands, big dark hands on which the

veins stood out, hands that had worked, and himself give "the lady" the celery. So he stood, with mounting emotion, and an occasional glisten in his grey oyster eyes, truly touched now by the sufferings of humanity. "Christmas, and she's all alone, how do you like that, eh?" he would say to the reporters and fuglemen on either side.

Sometimes at a particular tale of woe he would say, "Six children, eh—where's your husband, lady?" Her husband had died in the mill, or was in prison. Stoney made a note about it, he would do what he could.

So in endless variegation the troubles of humanity came to him at this Christmastide, interplayed with his own emotions and interests, and he often went out of his way to help people . . . getting one woman's daughter out of a whore-house—it was a case of white slavery—in another case getting a man out of the penitentiary, and as for coal, he had tons of it delivered.

And now, the distribution being over, he took himself off to what for want of a better word would have to be called his home. It had a woman in it, and not unattractive in a certain way, but it simply was not a home. He and the woman had long since parted in all but sharing the address. And on this Christmas there might be no turkey in the house for him who had given so many turkeys away. Sometimes he would go to the ice-box and fix himself a sandwich, or the next morning, dressing fairly well as if going to church (which he secretly abominated), so dressed and with the aspect of a man going to church he would perhaps sneak into some restaurant down-town (it didn't do for him to be seen in good places) or by chance take the bus and go to Steubenville or East Liberty and have the turkey dinner there. And Christmas night—having practically no friends, not wanting any really—he would look over the Blackstone which he had loved and still revered, and think of the days when he had come up from the backwoods and read Blackstone nights while working in the mill and think of the lawyer, the advocate, the big man he might have been . . . then possibly he would enter into his secret and furtive reading of psychopathia sexualis . . . and sometimes he would read the Congressional Record.

As he read the Congressional Record he thought of the speeches he might have made in Congress, of the men he had helped send down there (because of his 16,000 votes he could exert quite an

influence on the "slate"). And sometimes he thought upon the state of the nation, the great war "testing whether this nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."

Though he loved this country, he sometimes wondered if he wanted it to endure. In its promise, its Declaration, its legend. For with the decline of his own interests, his own being, Stoney realized there had been a decline in his feeling for the nation.

The people, why should they vote? Why all this going on, in churches, about their immortal souls? Why peddle this bull about how after the war there would be a better world? Why not tell them the truth, that they were eternally damned, condemned to do just as the smarter, more powerful men wanted them to do? And why not, as a matter of fact, have him and others like him run the Mill Districts of the world? Without this monkey business of the people voting, and thinking they had a hand in it.

Stoney was not a fascist, exactly. He certainly did very little hobnobbing with Nazis or the Ukrainian Fascists or the Black Legion or the Klan. None of that would have done in his district; in his district the Massacre of Lidice and the Rape of Poland burned like the flames of an eternal Bunker Hill. But Stoney felt a sort of world-wide regimentation should be put over by the American Army and an American Military Government, and that there should be an end of this idea of people having "rights." And though he cared nothing about the Japanese or the Chinese, he found his sympathies going to the Japanese. They were stronger, better organized. Why shouldn't they run the Chinese?

There was within Stoney not merely an impulse to modern fascism, but an ancient fascism, a Neroism. The turkeys and the baby shoes were another thing, they were his custom, they brought votes. And they did something else, they made him feel he wasn't so damned bad. But in essence he had a total hopelessness about humanity. Those wretched figures clutching at the turkeys, what could be done with such people? What do you mean they had Souls, Rights? Souls and Rights, he had come to feel, were the privilege of those who could afford them. With this came the sense that no one was a person to him, that no one was all right, any good. They were all Goddam Jews or Lousy Dagoes or Ignorant Hunkies or Poor Polacks or Dirty Guineas or Stinking Lithuanians. Even a man born in this country, from the very Pennsylvania mountains from which Stoney had come, was "a

goddam hill-billy." The world burned in the flames of his vast contempt.

It came out sometimes in his "court." Very often he was sensible, helpful, and fair. But at other times, feeling hopeless about it all, he would take to tippling, right in court. It was not drinking, but tippling. He would keep a pint bottle in the inner pocket of his coat, and slouch down in his swivel chair, right in the middle of a case. And his large, bony hand, clutching his coat lapel, would raise the uncorked bottle to his lips. It wasn't that he liked liquor so much, it was just a manifestation of his overlordship, his contempt, of his being in Mill District a law unto himself. Sometimes he winked to his constables. And sometimes he ended off with a little cough, as if it were only cough medicine in the inner pocket.

Well, such was the man Stoney, not the whole man by any means, merely a stab at him, a portrait of his symphonic being as it affected himself, Pittsburgh, the world. Long, long, long had the laurel and the dreams of laurel fallen from him; this rather was his gnarled, stumped, many-branched being, with roots deep, heavy, twisted, twining. Such was the man to whom Stella Witowski had gone, the man with whom she would have to deal.

Stoney's office was in a store. Outside this store stood Stella Witowski, her baby in her arms. She was reading the legend on the window:

J. STONEHAM PIKE

ALDERMAN	<i>Marriage Licences Issued</i>
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE	<i>Auto Tags, 24 hr. Service</i>
W. MUROWSKI, CONSTABLE	<i>Operator's Licence</i>
TOMMY NOWAK, DEPUTY	<i>Notary Public</i>
FELIX GRAEME, LAWYER	<i>Real Estate, Insurance</i>

She went in. Two men were seated at their desks. One had a sign, CONSTABLE. The other had a sign, LAWYER. She went up to the lawyer (a man with faded red hair and glasses) and inquired for the Squire. The lawyer pointed to the partition.

Stella went beyond the partition, and found herself in Stoney's court. A considerable number were ahead of her, some strung out before Stoney's bench, some in line to get

there, others seated on the chairs. She sat on one of the chairs.

There were some neighbourhood characters she knew—that is, recognized by sight. She was surprised to see “Rockey” Burlick, the — who sometimes hung outside department stores trying to get girls. And there was Eddie Pstalski, the Numbers writer. And Willie Doodek, who was sort of a bad guy, she didn’t exactly know how. These people hung outside of polling places on election day, flaunting their badges. They were important enough here, signalling someone to approach Stoney’s bench, waving others away. She was surprised too and thought it funny that Stoney, the Squire, should be drinking right in court. And oh boy, the look he gave her. She dropped her eyes, but she could tell, he was signalling the constable, Wladek Murowski, and they were whispering, she guessed about her.

Or maybe she was just self-conscious.

She was right. Stoney was whispering about her. He had noticed her when she came in, and shot a glance at her every now and again.

Yallah hair, he said to himself. I always liked yallah hair. Like corn silk. And blue eyes. And knockers. Skinny, but the knockers. The cutest little knockers I ever did see.

And with a baby, my, my.

To the constable he was saying, “You know that babe?”

Wladek nodded.

“Who is she?”

“Stella Witowski.”

Stoney nodded, he once knew a Witowski—“Her old man keep a grocery store?”

“No, he had to go back to the mill.”

“Which?”

“Three Mile.”

Stoney nodded. He said, “Roller?” This was able-bodied craftsmanship, well paid.

Wladek said, “Naw, common labour.”

Stoney nodded. “Does she kive?”

Wladek said, “Not for me.” Which meant not for him or anybody else he knew of.

“O.K.,” said Stoney and waved him away.

Some people crowded about the bench, but Stoney pointed to her, saying, “That little lady with the baby.”

Wladek, looking at her, giving no sign of neighbourhood recognition, said, "You're next, lady."

She went up to the bench. Stoney looked at her, saw the little cross hanging from the chain around her neck, it reminded him of what he felt about Catholics. Then gazing into her blue eyes, "Well," said Stoney, "what can I do for you?"

Stella said, "I had a baby." She put it forward a little.

I know you had a baby, he was saying to himself. Aloud he said, "Well?"

"I came here," said Stella, "for the compensation."

Stoney nodded, to himself he was saying: lay me and pay me. Aloud he said, "Married?"

She shook her head. "We're engaged."

He nodded, he had heard that before. He said, "How old's the baby?"

"Two months."

He made a note on a piece of paper. "What did you say your name was?"

"Stella Witowski."

He wrote, pretended to stop and think. "Witowski," he said, "didn't your father keep a grocery store?"

She nodded. He also nodded. "Nice man," he said. He looked at her, "How old are you?"

"Twenty."

Twenty, and givin' plenty. Twenty-one and havin' fun. Twenty-two and—— He said, "Is he married?"

She shook her head. He wasn't married, at least she didn't think so. He noticed her lack of sureness. I thought, he said to himself, you said you were engaged. You're not as engaged as you might be, sister.

He said, "Live in Pittsburgh?"

She shook her head. He said, "Out-of-town man?"

"He's in the Marines."

Oh, the Marines. They got plenty. Put 'em in uniform and the nookie was on. You'd think they could win the war with nookie. "Do you know where?"

She shook her head.

"What's his name?"

She hesitated—"Joe Drew."

He wrote it down, Joe Drew—he once knew a Drew. The crazy

inventor. He remembered the deal, the inventor's patents for a grocery bill, and the patents to Mr. Osmond of Three Mile Mill. He searched her face for a moment, it was blue-eyed and un-revealing, she was only a kid then, probably didn't know anything about it. Maybe it was some other Drew.

He looked at her. "What do you do?"

"Home girl."

Oh, a home girl. The mills were running full blast, so these babes were living off the old man . . . home girl.

He looked at her. "And it's his baby—the Marine?"

She nodded.

"Now as I get it," he said, "what you want is his allotment?"

She said, "Some support for his"—she had never used the word before, felt uncomfortable—"son."

Oh, his son. Have a boy, bring you joy. Have a girl— He filled out a printed form, an "Information." He turned it toward her, said, "Sign this."

She read the few simple statements. As a matter of fact, there was no such thing as compensation in her case, he was thinking. And she needn't have come to him, she could have gone elsewhere, but she didn't know that. How ignorant they were, how ill prepared for life. Probably went to school too, while he knew the ropes just by handling. . . . She had signed, was fumbling in her purse, murmuring, "What do I owe you?"

This case, he was thinking, had to be handled a special way. "Listen, Miss," he said, "this is a complicated case. I got an idea." To Wladek Murowski he said, "Get the lawyer."

When the lawyer came, Stoney looked at her and said, "Follow me." He got down off the bench and led the way to a back room.

Stella followed. She found herself in a bare room, iron bars at the windows, a pool table in the centre, pool cues on the walls, a desk and a number of chairs. Stella didn't know it, but in this room the constables and onhangers loitered, played pool, divided the "take" of the various rackets.

Stoney was explaining things to the lawyer, how the little lady's father was a friend of his. "You see," he said to Stella, "I can't give you free legal advice, but the lawyer here, maybe he can help us."

And he outlined the case. "You think it over, Felix," he said.

He noticed Stella fumbling for her pocketbook. "Never mind that," he said, smiling, "there's no charge for thinking."

With a nod he dismissed the lawyer. He looked at her frosty blue eyes, which seemed to flicker between being nervous and being grateful. "Well," he said, with smiling astuteness, "that's all. Why don't you drop in and see me some night next week?"

She nodded. "Do I bring the baby?"

"No," he said, "don't bring the baby."

He watched her go. My God, what eyes she had, what slim legs, what knockers.

I'm gonna get nookie, he said to himself. The word simmered in his mind, nookie, nookie.

He investigated. He took the lawyer, it being ostensibly the lawyer's case, and went to the proper authorities. Yes, there was a young man, a Pittsburgher, in the Marines, whose name was Joe Drew. No, he was not in this country. Stoney gathered he was in the Pacific.

The case was closed. There was nothing, he knew, he could do. A little drama of human life had unfolded itself before him. He looked down upon it from his vantage point: the boy, the girl, her father.

The boy was in the Pacific. The girl was just a girl. Her father was a poor Polack. Who could raise a hand for her, help her, defend her?

Nobody.

Stoney was at his moment of decision. As much as a certain thing had simmered in his mind before, now the die was cast. He was going to get this girl. His mind dwelled on her shapeliness, the small, splendid bursts of her breasts . . . he began to spruce up. Monday evening he waited. Tuesday. Wednesday. Thursday.

Stella too was conscious of the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. She was perfectly aware of something personal there. Also, she thought it strange he had asked her at night. Still, he was open nights. She thought of the street, the main street of Mill District, the furrier open nights, the credit dentist open nights, the shoe-stores and the doctors. Heavens, when would she live in a neighbourhood where they weren't open nights?

But her anxiety was getting the best of her. Maybe by now he knew something. She started for his office.

There were different men around, she noticed, as if he had different crews. And not much doing in court. Without asking her anything one of the men, as if expecting her, just pointed to the back room.

The Squire was there, a little more dressed up, and reading the paper. "Come in," he said, "sit down."

She did. He walked back and forth, tall, stoop-shouldered, hawk-faced and frowning. "Stella," he said, "I got bad news for you."

She just looked at him, her eyes large, blue, anxious—"Stella," he said, "he's in the Pacific."

"Oh," she said. The Pacific. She saw a lot of blue water, a few palms, Guadalcanal. Or maybe Australia. Or——

Anyway, he was alive, he wasn't dead, they knew about him. "Oh," she said.

He said, "I'm sorry, kid, there's nothing you can do. Except write him."

She looked off . . . she had tried that. Well, there was no use hanging around here. She took her purse from the table——

"Just a minute," he said. He looked at her. "You still want the support?"

Well, that's what she had started from, there was no use explaining the whole thing about her old lady, she nodded.

He looked at her, his eyes grey, misty, enveloping. "Stella," he said, "why should a nice girl like you worry about a few bucks?"

That was quick. She got up. He put himself in her way. His craggy face with the oyster eyes juttred out from above his broad shoulders. He said, "You know what I mean?"

Her blue eyes just looked at him . . . she knew what he meant.

With his hand flapping out behind him, he closed the door. And keeping his eyes on her, "I could be pretty good to you," he said.

The fool, the old man, the clown. "Please, Mr. Pike," she said, indicating the door, "let me out."

He had no intention of keeping her here against her will. But he was not yet ready to let her go. Something of her youth, her flashy, glistening eyes impelled him. He got all his "stuff," as he called it, "for free." But this time, impelled by her youth, her brave spirit, "I could give you plenty good times, you wouldn't have to worry," said he.

She drew back, not in fear, he could see, but rather in boredom, disgust.

Well, he wasn't going to stand there, beg, plead, humiliate himself for a Polack girl. And now with considerable dignity, "I'm just telling you, for your own good, we may as well be friends."

She looked at him, his coarse, wrinkled, bony face, how different he was from a young man, from Joe. . . .

He was giving the victim every chance. "You know what I mean?"

She nodded, she knew.

"You'll be sorry if you cross me," he said. "So just tell me, yes or no."

She looked at him. "Don't be a fool," she said. She went to the door, he made no effort to stop her.

"You'll be sorry," he said—but she was gone.

You made a mistake, sister, he said to himself.

The next morning Stoney went to work.

He called the Three Mile Mill, got the Legal Department, spoke to Stan Murcheson. Mr. Murcheson was a man with whom he had done an infinite amount of business. In Stoney's opinion, he was one of those lawyers who did it with "connections and a waxed moustache." Nevertheless, Stoney was affable, man-to-man, though playing his own importance down. As a matter of fact, he knew Stan Murcheson did not really know the roots of his power here, based on his old knowing of Mr. Osmond. Stan Murcheson only knew there was more than the eye could see. "Mr. Murcheson," Stoney said, "there's a man there, Witowski the name is, Wenceslaus Witowski. Been there a good many years. Labourer. I think," he said, "it might be better if the man's laid off for a while. As I understand it, he's under investigation." This hinted vaguely at the F.B.I. "If you say so, Squire," Mr. Murcheson said.

Mr. Murcheson got in touch with a certain foreman, Mike Donahue, a grizzled Irishman with honest blue eyes and decent ways. "Old Wency," Donahue said, "there must be some mistake."

"Well, if there is," Mr. Murcheson said, "it will clear up."

It will, will it, Donahue said to himself. He was a little tired

of this thing. Every once in a while the axe just struck, in the dark. And strangely, the man always got his job back. And strangely, the Squire always got the man's wife. But hell, he thought, this couldn't be it, Wency's wife was too old.

He didn't know what to make of it. Still, orders are orders. Tell me, God, he said to himself, why is it a man never can be a man?

And gritting himself, and taking Wency over to a corner, Wency all dripping with sweat, even his long moustaches dripping—"Wency," he said, "I got bad news for you." And he told him, he was fired.

Wency didn't get it at first. His big, sorrowing eyes had a good-natured though faintly worried gleam. "You mak' joke," he said.

But finally Donahue convinced him it was no joke. Wency just stood there, his eyes sorrowing, his whole face, chest, hands, angry, hairy and sweaty. For once he had the courage to fight for himself. "Why?" he demanded. "You tell me why." Nobody in the mill worked harder than he. "Why," he demanded, "why?"

"I don't know," said Donahue, getting angry himself. "God-dam it, man, I only work here myself."

"Who tol' you?" Wency demanded.

"The Legal."

Wency nodded. He put on his coat, saying, "I go see, mak' mistake."

He went to the Legal Department, asked a clerk. The clerk brought out word: no, it was no mistake. No, he could not tell why, he was busy himself. "Now look, mister," he said, "there's a war."

Sometime, Wency said to himself, I think world mak' war on me.

He stood outside. He looked at the great open sheds of the mill, at the railroad cars going in and out, at the flames billowing to the open windows.

He looked up the river at the other mills, the vast forest of stacks in the Pittsburgh sky, the flame from the stacks, the bronze smoke. Goddam, sunrumbitz.

For a moment he thought to go home, take rest, tell his wife. Goddam, no go home.

No go saloon, drink beer.

Goddam, war. Mak' production.

He felt a curious homelessness. He had worked some other places, years ago. But he was "Three Mile Millman," as he put it. That was the mill he knew, felt at home in, understood, knew in all its ins and outs . . . he dropped this now, knowing the great hazard of the unemployed, the wandering mind.

Get job. Work. Mak' victory.

He went to one mill, another—"Why did they let you go?"

He looked at them, his brown eyes in worried stupidity. "Damn if I know."

Well, they could soon find out, call Three Mile Mill. "I don't know exactly," Mr. Murcheson said, "he's under observation about something."

And that was that.

A strange thought occurred to Wenceslaus: he wasn't going to get job. But it was impossible. All the mills, in all the papers, were screaming for help; take old, take boy, take anybody, no experience, don't know nodding . . . but he, goddam, no get job.

He tried the next day and the next. Then he knew.

"Blacklis'."

That was it. There could be no other explanation. It was like a mystery, like a plague.

"But why?" said Mrs. Witowski.

He shook his head, he didn't know.

Of course, there were other things he could do, he could try some other industry, some other place. But he was steelman, Pittsburgh man, belong here. No go other place.

Like the plagues of Europe it descended upon him, and like the plagues of Europe it would pass, killing him or letting him live.

It was Wency's pride that suffered most. Recently he had had a little joke. In the evening, before going to bed, he would flex his arms, as if gathering all his strength, and say, "I'm goin' kill Hitler to-morrow."

He hadn't always wanted to kill Hitler. In fact, when Hitler was killing Jews he looked upon it with some amusement. And when Smigly-Rydz said the Polish Air Force would knock the Germans out in a few days, he said it too. But now that Hitler had butchered Poles, he had a fierce hatred for Hitler, the hatred, in a way, of one betrayed. Hitler was going to kill Jews for him; instead of that, Hitler also butchered Poles.

The mill was his way of getting even. He didn't need any poster,

morale-builder, talks on absenteeism. He gloried in it every time he moved pig iron to the flame, every time he hauled steel bars away, he kept muttering to himself, "I'm killin' Hitler."

Now he was no longer killing Hitler.

Bitter, sad, morose as it was to him, his family was of good cheer, couldn't believe it was a blacklist. "It's just one of those things, Pa," Stella said. "There's a shortage of coal, or the orders are down this week, or something. Don't worry, Pa, just take it easy, rest up."

He looked at her, his big brown eyes sad and dissatisfied, but he said nothing. He knew, he could feel, he was steelman, Three Mile Millman; when he feel blacklis' it was blacklis'.

"Now cheer up, Pa," Stella said.

All the same she prepared to go to work.

She got her old job back, and at more money, and everybody was very sweet to her, even if she did have a baby. And something in her relaxed. Earning her own living, and taking care of her baby, and bringing something into the house . . . boy, it was good. If only she could hear from Joe. And her eyes looked down the aisle of the department store to the far wall, and looked and looked, till she almost thought she could see the Pacific.

Then one morning she thought she saw Wladek Murowski hanging outside the house as she went to work. Later she saw him in the aisle of the store.

That day she was told her services wouldn't be needed any more.

Jesus Christ. Was it Wladek Murowski, Stoney?

Well, she would try another store.

"Where did you work? . . . Why did they dispense with you?"

And she couldn't get a job there either.

Something was on, the same thing that was on with her father. Did it go back to Stoney? How could he, how could he have such influence here or at the mill?

Or, if he had some kind of influence, you'd think a great big department store like the Pittsburgh Store would be above caring whether or not one of its girls would lay for Mr. Stoney Pike.

Yes, Stella, you would think so. And the store was above caring. But at the Pittsburgh Store there was a Mr. Joe Slater, the

Assistant Superintendent, with his red, apoplectic face, his pince-nez and his somewhat bulging eyes. And his manner of everything, everything being too much for him. And it was, almost. These days he was "going crazy," as he said, getting help. In his own terms they took the "knock-kneed, the bow-legged, the cock-eyed and the crazy." Why then, Stella, did he fire you?

Well, you see, Stella, it's this way. Mr. Joe Slater was obliged to Squire Pike. Stoney had told him when the Department Store Employees Union was in the wind. And when Mr. Joe Slater was hard up for wagon boys, Stoney could always dig him up a couple.

And what of Mr. Maxwell Goldfarb at that other store where you applied, and Mr. Townsend Grubb at the third store? Well, you see, Stella, Stoney helped them too. He was a useful man, Stella, he had to be obliged.

But Stella didn't know all this, she could hardly believe it. All she knew was she couldn't get a job, her father couldn't get a job . . . then her baby took sick, the croup.

Mrs. Witowski, faced with her family's joblessness, and illness in the house, knew just what to do. There were always ads in the papers, about a certain kind of work. One evening, after a meagre dinner, Mrs. Witowski left the house saying she wouldn't be back for a while . . . went to an office building, got a job scrubbing floors.

Wenceslaus was enraged. Stella said, "For God's sake, Ma!" But Mrs. Witowski was adamant. Her husband and daughter didn't have jobs, it was her turn now.

Stella said, "I'll get a job, Ma, honest I will. I can sell in some other kind of a store." Mrs. Witowski looked at her with those stormy eyes. "Your baby is sick," she said, "just take care of it. And let us all be quiet and sensible with each other." She looked at her daughter. "You'll learn, my child," she said, "that in life there are many things we must do."

Then she took her rags and scrub-woman equipment, and went to the office building.

When a mystery struck the life of a man like Wenceslaus Witowski it was indeed a mystery. He had little conception of the workings of a great city, of the tugs and pulls of his life. He was like a swimmer, an exhausted swimmer, who had sometimes found

he could go with the tide, sometimes struggle against it. But what explanation could there be for the tide?

The tide was immutable, at times it seemed like God, the Will of God. And yet, in his believing way, Wenceslaus could hardly believe that God, the Polish God, the Catholic God, would try him so.

He knew too there was an evil in man, that many men knew more than he, that some were "smart." He thought Jews were smart, that lawyers were smart (though they had done him little good), that salesmen were smart, Heinz and his pickles were smart, they all had an unexplained smartness.

But he himself, Wenceslaus Witowski, was not smart. His mind took him only part of the way, he recognized that now. Times in his life he had thought he was smart, when he had the grocery store. He had seen a glimmer, almost, of how he was going to make it, make money, get into the world of those who were smart.

Then the depression hit him and the bank closed.

Why there were depressions and why the banks closed, all that was a mystery. And he could see now, he had admitted to himself for some years now, as far as he was concerned it would remain a mystery.

In truth, he no longer cared to know. All he wanted was to work, to earn his bread, to work harder than anyone else, to help Poland and the United States, to drop dead, God willing, in the mill.

He knew the great steelmaster Jones had been consumed by the flames, everybody in steel, all the old-timers knew it. And Wenceslaus wanted to die that way. Not that he would bring it about, he was too religious and too regular a man to contemplate suicide. Only it was a sort of dream to him, he would be consumed by the flame with which he had worked, the flame would take him and the steel, and present both to God, eternity, the United Nations . . . at times he could almost hear the angels sing.

Not now. Now he had been stopped, not only of his life, but of his death. He could not die as a living thing, working, fighting for Poland, the United Nations. No, he was left to rot. This much Wenceslaus understood. There was a plot against him, some great power was at work, there was something crooked about it, bad, unfair.

In his stupid way Wenceslaus made it out. His daughter. And

the baby. It all started when Stella went for compensation. Before that there was no trouble. And how was it Stella could get no job in the Pittsburgh Store, or any other store? The cry of the baby, it added a strange note to it all, strange and small and piercing—it went back to the baby. He could see. He was not smart, but he could see.

He remembered his own dealings with Stoney—he was smart, Stoney was, King of the "District." And there were tales in the District, steelmen's tales, Stoney being after women.

For a moment he thought of going to him. But what good would it do, what could he say, what did he know? And Stella with her stubbornness would say nothing, like with the soldier.

But he couldn't sit this way. For a moment he thought of going to Sam McRae. Sam McRae was a Congressman. He had been a steelman. Once, years ago, he had met him at a picnic. He could go to him, tell all.

But Sam McRae was too great a man, he sat in Washington, went to see the President. Wenceslaus thought of going to the Union, but this too was fraught with difficulties. Wenceslaus was not what in some quarters is called a hero of labour.

Years ago, when he first came to America, there had been a strike, and Wenceslaus, because they asked him in Polish and whipped up his enthusiasm, went out with the strikers. And the company, as the foreman said later, had taught him a lesson. It was indeed a lesson—that the world belongs to the strong, and the company was strong. There was trouble again, and Wenceslaus had gone scabbing, and that time too he had learned that the world belonged to the strong—a striker hit him with a brick. As the striker, an Irishman, had said, "Listen, Poe-lock, I'm goin' to fan ye with a brick," and he did. Wenceslaus woke up in the hospital, and the company was not there to pay off.

When the strikers again came to him with "Well, Wency, are you a man or are you a mouse?" Wency thought he had the right answer.

He said, "Me mouse."

"Well," they said, grabbing him, "we'll show you how to be a man." And he was forced out on strike.

Well, thought Wency, as he surveyed his history in labour, he wasn't the kind the Union would stick up for. He wasn't what smart people called a "politicalized worker." He only wanted to

work and be left alone. And he had a pretty good hunch, if he came with his troubles nothing much would be done.

In fact, it would be spreading tales. "Old Wency, he was laid off because his daughter wouldn't. . . ."

He thought of going to Father Tadeusz, but what could he tell him? She wouldn't talk about her troubles, experiences. For a moment he thought the time had come to beat it out of her, but no, that was not the thing to do.

Oh God, what?

So he prayed, asked God . . . and no answer came to him.

Then he would rack his brain for something he had done in the mill, something wrong. Then his mind went back to her, to Stoney.

Finally he spoke to her. "You no gettin' compensation?"

"No."

"Why not?"

She shrugged. "He's in the Pacific, Pa."

He could lie there, deep down, the dirty seducer. Wenceslaus said, "You no gettin' job?"

"Not yet, Pa."

"Why?" He looked at her. He said, "Why tak' long time?"

She shook her head, miserable. He said, "Never tak' long time before. You try, eh?"

"Yes, Pa."

Fortunately, she got a job in a store in a far neighbourhood. But after a few days this only seemed to make matters worse. Stella could get job, his wife could get job. But he, steelman, no get job.

There was another thing that gnawed at him; his wife left at six, Stella had to work till nine or ten in the neighbourhood store. In the hours between his wife's going and his daughter's return, he was the baby-minder.

Not that he had anything against the baby, he liked the baby. But goddam, steelman feed baby, steelman change baby, steelman sit here, like goddam night watchman.

He was appalled too by Stella, as she came in, the ribbon she sometimes put in her blonde hair, her flashing red fingernails, the net stockings she wore that seemed to accentuate the curves of her skinny legs, the light in her blue eyes, as if her eyes had been in the tinsel and dazzle of the world—her whole cheap array. Yes,

in a way it was cheap to him. And the way she sometimes went down the hall, "trucking" she called it, snapping her fingers, singing to her baby. And the thing she had bought and kept hanging in her room, a little service flag with a star, and the words: Serving with the U.S. Marines. Goddam, he don't mind, she workin', she spendin' money, all right have flag for boy go fight . . . he understood, if she were married to him it would be in the window, instead she had it on the wall of her room, above the baby's bed, not far from the picture of the Virgin.

Goddam, she chippy, that's what. Her whole array reeked to him of the whorish, horrible, sexy. And the emblem she wore, a United States eagle over her left breast, just calling attention to it, it seemed to him. He was not against patriotism, he was for it, but not over the left breast. He could see now what an array like that would do to some men.

He looked at her, her pallid face, the frosty blue eyes, the cherry colour of her lips, the eagle over the left breast, the net stockings up to her knees, the little gold cross at her neck, but he had seen that on *kurwas* too . . . he could see her uncomfortable at his staring, but he couldn't help it. He stared.

You, he almost said, you are the cause of my trouble.

She must have felt it. She looked at him in an uncomfortable way, went to bed.

Wenceslaus put out the light, sat in the dark. Too much money, the light. No work, goddam, sit in dark.

He sat in the dark. From his window, as from most of the windows on Polish Hill, he could see the light of the mills, the flames of the mills, as ever, writing their fire language in the sky. Like all steelmen, he could tell by the colour of the flames in the sky, by the colour of the smoke that came with the flame, exactly what was doing in the mill. He could tell not only what was doing at Three Mile, but at J. & L., at National Tube——

Goddam. She was the cause of his trouble.

Now, nightly when she came home he sat there, looking at her, his big melancholy brown eyes saying: you are the cause of my trouble, you are the cause of my——

She began to get it, out of his dark face, out of his brown eyes, out of her own consciousness, sense of guilt. The words persisted with her: you are the cause of my trouble.

She went to bed, avoiding him. And for days kept out of his

sight. Still, she couldn't avoid him all the time. And whether she did avoid him or not, she would see his brown eyes, his misery, and feel that terrible accusation: you are the cause of my trouble.

She was sorry for him. It was indeed an evil thing that had happened to him, a dirty shame. And the truth was, she was the cause of his trouble.

Something occurred to her. At first she dropped it, but now she could no longer avoid it. She was the cause of his trouble. And she could fix it. That is, if she gave in.

Give in. The thought occurred to her, in all its ugliness. She couldn't. But neither could she stand the sight of his eyes, beseeching her with misery and accusation.

Then something came to her. She would go to Stoney. Jesus Christ, wasn't she an American citizen, did he have the right to do this to her, to them? She would fight, beg, implore, scream, threaten to expose him—she didn't know how, but somehow.

By Jesus Christ, she wasn't going to take it any longer.

So, he thought, you've come. I knew I'd get you, Polack.

It was evening. He went about the business of his court, listening to cases, dragging out each "Information." It was 10.30 before he was ready to shut up shop, several times she tried to go up before him, but he paid no attention, always signalling for someone else—he's trying to keep me to the last, she thought. And when she was the last, his cold, lined face seemingly absorbed in the legal papers before him, "I'd like to see you, Mr. Pike," she said.

He gave her a cut of the grey eyes. "You're seeing me," he said.

Big, blond, bulky Wladek Murowski was lounging near by. "Could I see you private, like?" she said.

"Well." Stoney didn't seem to know what to say. He said, "The boy's in the Pacific. It ain't gonna do no good hangin' around."

My God, she thought, how cold. But managing to give him a personal look, "I want to see you," she said.

He thoughtfully shuffled the papers before him. "I got a lot of work to do," he said. "I'm goin' to take these papers and go home." He put his papers in his pocket, reached for his hat, nodded a perfunctory good night.

She didn't know what to do, looked after his large, powerful

frame, decided to follow him out. She walked alongside, looking up at him. He seemingly took no notice, but, she realized, he was allowing her to come along.

They passed a saloon. "You want a beer?" he said.

She stopped, looking up at his grey, oyster eyes. "Listen, Mr. Stoney," she said, "why don't you let my old man go back to work?"

He looked at her, his eyes cold, impersonal. And with a bit of long-nosed hauteur, "I don't do business in the street."

"Then where?"

He didn't answer, went on, she went along.

"Where, Mister Stoney, where?"

Finally they came to a three-story building on Penn Avenue. He indicated it. "That's where I live—third floor."

She looked up at the flat building, shabby, but substantial.

"But," she said, "your wife's there."

He nodded. "You be there," he said, indicating upward, "ten o'clock Thursday night."

To go, or not to go.

To go, or not to go.

The question, like a pendulum, swung back and forth. And with it an unavoidable thought: she could take care of herself. She remembered the fat guy that had her cornered in the stockroom. Even then she had known what to do, give 'em the shoe. But nothing like that would happen. His wife would be there.

To go, or not to go.

Stoney also had a problem, his wife. He had been married for a good many years to a tall, queenly woman, for all the shamble in her walk. She had a dark, handsome, gipsy face, rather small, cynical, poetic eyes, and a lot of coarse black hair. Her name was Mace Diggs, she was of Welsh-Irish-Scotch extraction, though unmistakably somewhat gipsy. She wore large, swooping, be-birded hats and dresses overhung with costume jewellery. In her tall, shamblly way and in her strange costumes, often of another period, she seemed like an actress of old plays who forgot to take the costume off. And indeed she was something of an actress, and had played something of a part. Mace Diggs had been a shoplifter.

There was nothing against her in Pittsburgh; in fact, nobody in Pittsburgh knew anything about her. Though up in Binghamton,

Elmira, Wilkes-Barre, Corning, and Oneonta there were countless "Informations" and complaints. All this she told Stoney, many years ago, when they had met. But Stoney, being a somewhat different man then, and being much compelled by her queenly robustness and the flare of her poetic eyes, leaped over the hurdle in his mind and married her. She was far from the woman an up-and-coming Squire who still hoped to be a lawyer should marry; he knew that, but he thought he'd take a chance. She was not a psychopathic shoplifter; he figured that once she had some other means of support, she would give it up.

He had been quite right about that, quite right in all you could "figure." Only, Mace had met a man. A strange man, who came to a strange death. All this was related to Stoney's downfall within himself. And, as a matter of fact, she too had declined. These days Mace Diggs was a drunk.

But not your street-corner drunk; in fact, she was rarely to be seen on the streets of Mill District, she had an absolute abhorrence of it. She was a lonely soul, a solitary drinker, a wanderer, at times, of the alcoholic mist.

It may be asked why Stoney stayed with her; he asked himself at times. And it wasn't that a public man wasn't supposed to get a divorce. He loathed these street-corner moralities, he was too intrenched, too proudly individualistic to be bothered with anything like that. No, it was something else. For one thing, she protected him in a manner of speaking from the claims of other women. And for another, she still had something "on" him in an inner way. Her small black eyes still had the mockery they had had when they first met. She didn't believe in him then, and she didn't believe in him now. It was a quality, Stoney thought, that made a sucker out of a man, possibly it was what had made a sucker out of him. Not that he liked her any more, but in a strange way he respected her. She, in a manner, though she had been sucked down in the whirlpool of life, never called for help. When she wasn't drunk, her eyes still flashed a poetic mockery of his life, his kingdom, his girls. Besides, he could talk to her. There was nothing between them except that strange high bridge . . . she could understand.

He had long since been frank about his little amours. And, being a public man, he avoided hotels. Therefore it was a matter of the woman's home or his own home. A man's home is his castle

—how many times he had said that in adjudicating disputes. Therefore he had his little stuff in his home.

There was never any trouble about getting Mace to go. But always, with an amused and witching eye, she would wait to see what the "victim" was like. "What's the victim like this time?" she would say.

"Come on, come on," he would say, "let's go."

She always went to a good hotel and went to bed with her beloved bottle.

Now as she stood there, in her great swooping hat, a heavy fur coat around her, shapeless and grand, like the buffalo robe of some old drover, she was slowly picking over the brandy bottles. She shot him a dark, mocking eye, as if to say: well, Stoney, old boy, I know it annoys you to have me hang on so—

"Get out, get out," he said snappishly.

In fact, he thought, if the girl didn't come, he might prevail upon Mace, he hadn't had her in—could it be that long?

There was a knock at the door. Mace, with the bottle under her arm, opened it.

Stella said, "Is Mr. Pike here?"

Mace looked at her, pointed to where he was, started out—

"Oh, don't go, Mrs. Pike," Stella said, realizing by the contemptuous flare of those black eyes that this was Mrs. Pike . . . but Mace was gone.

Stella looked at Stoney. So, it was a put-up job. "I better go, Mr. Pike."

"What's your hurry?" He put himself between her and the door.

Gee whiz, this was quick.

"Take your coat off," he said.

"Now look, Mr. Pike," she said. "I know you're not a bad fellow—"

"You're not a bad kid yourself," he said, taking in her eyes, indicating her coat, "take it off."

"It's no use, Mr. Pike."

"Come on," he said, "I just wanna see a little something."

I would, she was thinking, if I could, but I can't. She held the coat tighter about her.

"Come on, kid," he said, indicating the decanter on the table, "have a drink."

She shook her head. "Listen, Mr. Pike," she began, her eyes appealing to him, "I know you're not a bad fellah. You helped lots of people, I know. Please, Mr. Pike," she said, "my father, he worked hard all his life, let him go back to work."

Stoney saw the appeal in her eyes, he liked 'em when they still believed, when they still thought there could be a Santa Claus. "Look, babe," he said, "take off your coat."

"Please, Mr. Pike," she said, "I don't want to."

"Come on, babe," he said, "give us a little look-see."

In desperation she let her hands drop, her coat flapped loosely. He came up to her, put his hands on her.

"Please, Mr. Pike," she said, "don't. I didn't come for that. I don't care anything about me. I would give you anything, honest I would, if I could. But I can't. I got a baby, Mr. Pike, for God's sake——"

She stepped back, he kept following her, wanting to get his hands on her, rub her around. "Please, Mr. Pike," she said, "I came up here to ask you to let my father go back to work. He's never done anything——"

He pointed to the bedroom. "Get in there," he said.

"You wouldn't, Mr. Pike," she said, feeling him push her, "honestly you wouldn't, you wouldn't make me. Please, Mr. Pike, let my old man go back to work."

He pushed her—"No you wouldn't, Mr. Pike."

He slapped her. "Shut up, you Polack," he said, "and get on that bed."

Shut up! Shut up, you Polack, and get on that bed! She felt as if a burning haze flamed over her face. "Who are you? Goddam you," she said. "You think just because you're a lousy Squire, my father can't go to work unless I lay for you."

"That's it, babe," he said.

"Why, that's dirty," she said, "that's the lousiest, filthiest thing. You wouldn't do that, would you?"

Suddenly he smacked her across the face, a hard, stinging smack.

"You sonofabitch," she said. She hardly knew she was saying it, "you dirty coward, you monster. You think just because you're a lousy little Squire everybody's got to lay for you!" She did not know where she got the words, out of the streets, out of things scratched on hallways and doors, all over the stones and walls of

the city, she had seen the words, and now they came tumbling out of her. "You dirty bastard," she said. Suddenly she socked him, kicked his shins.

"So," he said, "you'll hit Stoney, you'll hit an old man." He was coming toward her, his coarse mat of hair down on his forehead, his grey eyes with an animal blear, he circled her, keeping away from her sudden kicks, his mouth open. "Come on," he said, "come on, Polack." It was a long time since he had had a knock-down, drag-out fight.

"Comere," he said, "comere!" He lunged at her, but she eluded him. Suddenly he backed her into a corner. "You bitch," he said, "you lay for him, but you won't lay for me, eh? I'll—" and he lunged at her, his big hands clawing at her as if to tear off her dress.

"You wouldn't dare," she said, "you wouldn't dare!" He hit her across the mouth, she felt stung and dazed. She didn't know she was mumbling, "God, please, Joe—"

He hit her again, her lips had a strange sensation, she felt blood trickling down. I've got to, she said to herself, I've got to kill him—

All of a sudden she felt a pain in her neck, he had hit her back of the neck. She felt her face going forward, she felt her head about to fall off her shoulders—suddenly it snapped back, he had smacked her on the chin.

She felt herself slumping, falling, that's all she knew.

As she lay stretched out on the rug, her head not far from the couch with the mahogany lion paws, Stoney looked at her. Her dishevelled blonde hair, her chin, with a trickle of blood, her partly open blouse, one of her breasts sticking up.

He paused now, in a daze. One thing he was not, a rapist. He had never raped anyone before. Many times he had thought of it, what would it be like? Now he thought, why not? Life was going. Those last things, the last pleasures, the secret dreams—what are we waiting for?

He had never done it before. But everything has to have a first time. He got her to the bed.

Later, when he had had enough of her, he got some water and a washrag, dabbed some water on her face, wiped the trickle of blood from her chin. Her face was a little swollen, he put some ice on it. Then he pressed her temples, the way he had seen cops bring drunks around.

When she stirred, he left the room. He sat in the living-room, in a sort of brooding daze.

When she appeared she was fully dressed, both hands holding the collar of her coat about her face. He could see a bit of her face, just a glimmer of her eyes.

He went up to her. "Listen," he said, "keep your mouth shut. And your father can go back to work. Now keep your mouth shut, see?"

And with that, he indicated her to the door, opened it for her, let her go. Dirty Polack, he said to himself. Any woman he had had was from then on unclean to him. That's why he needed new ones.

Stella found herself outside, on the sidewalk. She was dizzy and sick. She shuddered, suddenly she found herself vomiting.

Horrible as it all was, she knew what to do. Some drugstore would be open. She would get that thing, take care of herself.

Finally, she got to bed, stayed there past the time when she usually got up. When her mother came in—"I'm sick, Ma," she said.

A little later she heard a man come in, a Polish man, an innocent man. "I come from mill," he said. "They tell me tell you, all big mistake. They say Wenceslaus Witowski go back to work."

Book II
JOE DREW

CHAPTER I

THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER

THE TRAIN ROARED through the night. It was a big train, a crowded train, a war train. It seemed encased in night and fire and darkness and rain. The train was hurtling, rolling, rocking out of Ohio toward Pittsburgh.

In a seat next to the window, his elbow on the windowsill, was a Marine. He wore the dress uniform of the Marine Corps, the blue coat, the light blue pants, the white belt. His white hat was tilted down over his face.

On the blue coat was a medal, the Silver Star.

The man who wore the Silver Star was Joe Drew. The star had been awarded to him "For Gallantry." The citation said something about "Devotion beyond the realm of duty" on Guadalcanal.

Joe Drew swayed with the sway of the train. But there was something else to his sway, as if some of it came from within, from a desire to sway, lurch, forget, live it out.

Now and again he would take a bottle from his pocket, raise the white hat from his face, take a swig from the bottle, lower his hat over his face.

He had been drinking since Chicago, but he knew where he was, what he was doing. The journey, since Gary, had been extremely painful to him. Not only because of his personal discomfort and his jangled nerves. But because of a sight, a sight he both dreaded and loved: fire in the sky.

He loved it because he just naturally loved it, its creativeness, its magnificence, its steel. And the memory of his father, who had lived and died by that flame. And his own hopes and illusions

about the future, in which he too, please God, would work with that flame.

All that was all right. But unfortunately the flame took him back to Guadalcanal, to pink and red in the night, and dark forms running toward that fire, and falling, falling, falling. And others running on, the Marines, the U.S. Marines.

There was, he knew, something about him that would always be the U.S. Marines. Sometimes he felt it was silly, the pride of outfit, the pride of the branch of service. He had tried to say, with other guys, "We're all fighting for the same thing." It was a thing the service tried to drum into you, and maybe it was true . . . but the Marines, the U.S. Marines.

Who had to take it without air support, who had to make the first splash on the beaches. But he couldn't, he shouldn't think of that. It got him excited again, that red haze came over him, his wounds started to ache, the malaria gremlin got on that inside bicycle and started to cycle around the track that had become his strange, crazy, inside track.

"Take it easy, take it easy" . . . so whistled the guy behind him. O.K., brother, I'll try. The doctor said I got to. Only when I see that fire, it all goes back to Guadal, that red haze, the red and the black.

Funny, his father had had a book, *The Red and the Black*. He had never read it, or anything much. Anyway, from what Pop had told him about it he gathered it meant the gamble of life, the red and the black, like on a roulette table.

Well, brother, Guadal was the red and the black. What gets you sometimes is the guys that go. Not that you don't know somebody has to. But that it should be the Greek, or Ron, or that kid lieutenant. And that you get hardened to it . . . you do and you don't. Finally you get hardened to all but one. Your pal. Ron.

Christ, Ronnie Osmond, the son of the guy that stole Pop's inventions. How the hell did he get to be pals with Ron? But it just happened. Ron was a right guy, solid—millions of bucks, square as they make 'em, something of a poet, and sorry his father was that kind of a guy.

Ronnie, I drink to you, Ronnie. I don't thank you for saving my life. I don't thank you for teaching me to be a soldier. I thank you for the fun you made me see, for the poetry you weren't afraid to say. I thank you that you thought my old man was a great

guy, and that you listened to the inventions I wanted to make. . . .

He was aware now of a man who came and sat across from him. The man was a little man, grey-haired, with a boyish face, something beaten and dreamy in his eyes. He's never hurt anybody in his life, thought Joe, that's what's wrong with him. The man was getting up the courage to speak to him . . . now he made it.

"I hear it's pretty bad out there," he said.

Joe felt himself half smiling, he didn't know what to say. He knew some guys told 'em stories, other guys were mad and couldn't speak. He thought he'd strike a balance. "It's O.K.," he said.

The little man smiled and said, "I got a son in Georgia."

Joe nodded. Jesus Christ, Georgia. What in hell could happen to him in Georgia? Still he understood, the little man was very sentimental about his son. "In the infantry," the little man said.

Jesus Christ, the infantry. Now the Marines, that's an outfit . . . hold it, he said to himself. He couldn't help it, he took out the bottle, it was what Ron would call gauche. Ron used the word in a funny way, sometimes he said, "The Japs are getting gauche."

He drank. The little man seemed disappointed, moved away.

Joe Drew sat there, rolling with the roll of the train. He couldn't help it, he was not quite accommodated to life. Or to train-riding with civilians. Or with these new soldiers, for that matter. It had been swell, coming up from San Diego, he had been with four Marines, with scalps in their belts. He went out to the platform. He wanted to be alone. He wanted the stand-up sway of the train, the wind through the platform, the song of the train and the rain. He looked upon the great splotches of fire which meant you were coming into Pittsburgh. You were going by hell, this was hell with the lid off, the creative hell, the endless workshop, the furnace, Pittsburgh.

He couldn't help it, he loved it. What the hell there was to love about Pittsburgh, he didn't know. But he loved it. He wanted to see Polish Hill again, and Nigger Hill, and Stell, and Mom, out there, up at Mill Creek. . . . He remembered his goodbye and his hatred of Pittsburgh; it was strange that he should come back to it with this throat-catching love.

"Pittsburgh," said the porter. "Pittsburgh."

Big, brown, dirty Pennsylvania Station was roped off to the side; in the roped-off space the draftees, in civilian clothes, were

going off to war. Their fathers, mothers, sweethearts, brothers stood looking on.

Joe Drew stood looking on. It seemed strange to him. Here he was, back from war, and others were going to war . . . tall ones, fat ones, incredibly young ones, some bald and slouchy, some evidently the fathers of three or four kids, breaking ranks for a moment to kiss the kids.

Joe Drew, bag in hand, stood looking on. These fat guys, and the long, lean stringy-beanies, how the hell could they make soldiers out of them? And yet, he knew it could be done. For a moment something in him said: go on, you bastards, see what it's like. But he also felt something in him that wished them well. He turned away. But the strangeness of it lingered with him, here he was back, and they just going. He shrugged it off, he couldn't help it, that's the way it was.

He thought now about his own problem. Ever since Chicago, ever since San Diego he had been wondering what he'd do when he got to Pittsburgh, whether he'd go out to see Mom, or go and see Stell. Now he knew he had been shadow-boxing with himself. Suddenly he felt in his pocket for a nickel, made a dive for a phone booth . . . he heard her low, husky voice, "Hello."

"Hello, Stell—Joe."

"Who?"—as if she couldn't hear, couldn't believe——

"Stell, it's me, Joe. I want to come over." And he was hopping a cab. The cab sped out a way, crawled up Polish Hill, he could see the two domes of the Polish church. A strange memory came back to him, a memory of his childhood, of this street, of Pop's inventions out on the street, when Pop was being foreclosed, dispossessed. "Right here," he said to the driver. "Right here."

He looked up at the dark, shabby building; yep, this must be it, the third floor all lit up, and a figure moving away from the curtains. He felt his palms moisten in anticipation, started up the dark stairs, the stairs hurt his bad leg, and there she was—Stell.

As she stood at the head of the stairs, in a pale blue dress the colour of her eyes—her eyes frosty and blue, with the frost melting out of them, glistening now with her tears, her yellow hair down to her shoulders—she seemed like an angel.

"Stell," he said, "Stell," and he broke toward her and took her in his arms. He felt the joy of her lips, stood holding her, swaying with her.

"Oh, Joe," she said, "Joe." She felt something, an indefinable something, that his passion was more than she expected, that he cared. "Oh, Joe," she said, crying, "Joe, I'm so glad you've come." And they stood, smiling, clinging to each other, looking into each other's eyes, hers sparkling with tears and joy. "Come on, Joe," she said, taking his hand, "come on in."

He followed her into the parlour, vaguely conscious of the piano, of the red-shaded kerosene lamp— He was kissing her, looking into her eyes, seeing again the wonder of her eyes unfolding to him, giving him her heart, her soul, whatever it was.

And she, smiling, "Here, Joe, let me look at you." And she looked at him, now seeing the Silver Star, her fingers touching it. "Joe," she said, looking into his eyes, "you didn't get that for nothing, Joe."

He smiled, no, not for nothing.

"Joe," she said, "was it bad out there?"

"Well," he said, smiling, "it wasn't good."

He put his arms toward her, but she smiled and put her hands between them. "Joe," she said, "I want to look at you." And she looked at him—his dark eyes, a little more flaring, thoughtful, manly. Something harder, more jagged about his face. But that same old smile, full of white teeth. "Joe," she said, indicating his shoulders, "you're huskier."

He smiled at her. "You're skinny," he said, "and wonderful."

Then she saw it, as he stepped toward her, he limped—she was pointing to his leg, "What's that, Joe?"

"Well," he said, smiling, "I got something there. But it'll be all right."

"You sure, Joe?"

He nodded, smiled.

"Oh, Joe!" She came toward him, her long slender hands gripping him, feeling him, feeling his arms, his chest, feeling him as if she were the woman in possession. "Anything else, Joe?"

He didn't like this, but he thought he might as well get it over with; he indicated his right arm, a few inches above the wrist.

She caught her breath, her eyes were steady. "Is that all, Joe?"

"No," he said, "I've had malaria. But everything will be all right."

"You sure, Joe?"

"I'm sure."

"And you're through, Joe?"

"I'm through," he said, smiling; "they wouldn't have me on a bet."

She sighed with relief. Thoughts came to her, her letters to him, the baby, Stoney. "Did you get my letters?" she said.

He shook his head.

"Did you write?"

He looked at her, shook his head.

"Why not, Joe?"

His eyes were serious. "I'd start to write," he said, "then you'd get in my way." He looked into her eyes, they were hypnotic to him, if you kept looking they could become like a sea, a sea of blue. . . . "I'd start to write," he said, "then I realized I didn't want to write, I just wanted you."

He looked into her eyes. "Can I tell you?"

She nodded.

He began to tell her, there were beautiful moments out there. "It's beautiful out there," he said, "a great big golden moon, and the palms. I'd start to think of you." And he told her how starved he was, not only sex-starved, but starved for the sight of a woman, the touch of a woman's hand. "Sometimes, Stell," he said, "I'd go so nuts, I'd start talking to you, it was like you were there, and we were together." He looked into her glistening eyes, his hand touched her hair, her shoulders, her breasts.

"When hell broke loose," he said, "and I was wounded and thought I was going to go . . ." and he told her, how she came to him, that she was the only beautiful thing that came through the bloody, thirsty, malarial hell.

"I guess I fell for you out there, Stell," he said. "I was always nuts about you, Stell. But I guess I just wanted what I could get." He looked into her beautiful glistening eyes. "But I don't feel that way any more, Stell. I——"

They heard a noise, a chair scraping in the kitchen, then foot-steps down the hall. Stella knew it was her mother, she had begged her not to come in. And here she was, hair pulled back, her grey-blue eyes, and an apologetic smile which seemed to say: I don't want to intrude, but you know how it is——

"Joe," Stella said, "this is my mother."

Joe said, "How do you do, Mrs. Witowski." Mrs. Witowski smiled at him, and to Stella, in Polish, said, "Is this the soldier?"

Stella said, "*Da.*"

Mrs. Witowski, in Polish, said, "Show him the baby."

"Oh, for God's sake, Ma," Stella said in Polish, "give me a chance, will you? You promised me."

"All right, all right," Mrs. Witowski said in Polish and, with an unhappy smile, retreated. This is not the way it was in Poland, she was thinking. In Poland they didn't chase the mother. She was lonely; Witowski was on the night shift.

But Stella, now that it had happened, wasn't too sorry her mother had come in. It relaxed her, gave her a chance to be like an ordinary being. And looking at Joe in a quite serious and friendly way, "Joe," she said, "what are you going to do?"

He smiled. "Well," he said, "that depends on you."

"Me, Joe?"

"Stell," he said, "out there I found out what I want to do. I want to invent. I'd like to tell you about it." And he told her, he and his pal in a shell hole, no air support, Jap planes overhead, and he thought of something, an automatic ack-ack. "Anti-aircraft," he said, "only automatic. It could handle anything, planes, rocket ships. I got the idea," he said, "from something Pop was working on."

And he told her about another thing, a fog-cutter, so that planes could see through the fog. "Of course, they see a little," he said, "but they could see more. And I've got some other ideas, Stell, just ordinary things you and I could use."

"But you see, Stell," he said, "being an inventor isn't the easiest thing. It might take a long time getting started, and——" His dark eyes glowed at her: "You're the girl, Stell," he said. "Only, would you be my girl, Stell?"—and his eyes suggested the rest of it: without marriage, without stuff that would keep me from doing what I want to do.

She understood, she understood perfectly. And she could see it from his point of view. He was a young fellow; even if he didn't want to invent he mightn't want to get tied up with a wife, family. And she might have had some sympathy for it. In fact, she felt a great tug of sympathy. The way his eyes glowed at her, carrying out the idea: you're the girl, Stell—only something had happened to her. With what had happened she had come to realize that love, men, sex weren't any easy proposition, they weren't a pattern you could take and cut any old way; if you did, pretty soon

the pattern, the love thing got too cut up. And besides . . . "Come here, Joe," she said, "I want to show you something."

She led the way to her room, struck a match, lit the lamp. But even before the lamp was lit, by the flickering shadows of matchlight he saw it—a baby in a crib.

He looked at her, she was looking at him, her open palm indicating the baby. He was going to say, whose is it? But she was bending over the baby, saying, "Come here, baby, come here, sweetheart, come here, Little Joe." The baby opened its eyes, smiled to her, reached its little hands up to her, she picked it up, held it for him, so he could see.

It was his baby. He knew it the instant he saw it. Not that it looked like him. The baby had his father's eyes, grey eyes, with a violet tinge, and that same large, dreamy, far-seeing look. His father's eyes, one-in-a-million eyes. But rather stupidly, "Mine?" he said.

She nodded.

And then it came over him, gee, what do you know. And in a flush of emotion he kissed her, said, "Gee, let me hold him," and reached for him.

"Look out, Joe," she said, and showed him how to hold the baby, how to support its head. "So it won't bobble," she said.

He turned to her, his face, for an instant, sharp, angry. "Why does it bobble?"

"Because they all do," she said.

He got it, it wasn't that she hadn't taken care of it. He was smiling at the baby, then he felt something. "Say, Stell," he said weakly, "he just got wet."

"All right," she said, "give him to me." And putting the baby in his crib, she changed him. She stepped out for a moment with the wet diaper. He noticed something in the corner, a welder's helmet, goggles, leather apron, gloves. When she came back he pointed to it. "What's this?"

"Oh," she said, smiling at him, "I got a job in a war plant." He could see by the flash of her eyes that she had thought of something cute. "I'm not Rosie the Riveter, I'm Stella the Weldah."

He looked at her, how tenderly she was tucking the baby away . . . the Virgin on the wall, the service star with the legend: Serving with the U.S. Marines. And beneath it, right on the flag, she had pencilled his initials, J. D.

He was no longer worried about her, about something that had often occurred to him: what was she doing while he was away? For though he had little official ground for any such thing, he had often thought of it.

The baby was asleep, she motioned him to go out. And when they were in the parlour——

"Stell," he said, "let's get married."

Oh my God, she thought, here it goes. Now I'll have to tell him. Her mind was machine-gunning her: Stoney, Stoney. She had long since determined not to say anything about it unless he was on the level, willing to go all the way. And now here he was, and she felt like nothing, what was she—— All of a sudden a convulsive sobbing came over her.

"Why, baby, darling, what is it?" And he came to her, tried to hold her, but she was all stiff, sobbing, frozen, hurt. She tried to shake her tears and her frozen quality away.

"Come on, Joe," she said, "I've got to get out of this house."

They were no sooner out than she was aware of a problem. His leg. It was only a little limp, but—— "Joe," she said, "let's get a street-car or a cab."

He looked at her. "Where we going?"

"I don't know, Joe. Let's just go."

When they had a cab, "The William Penn," she said.

She had never been to the William Penn, except once, when she had to go to the ladies' room. But she knew there was dancing there. A strange idea had occurred to her, maybe they could go dancing, she would be very gay, smile through her tears, like in the movies. They would go Dancing in the Dark, with my tr-r-rue love, dancing in the . . .

Only, this wasn't the movies, and she didn't have the right clothes, and maybe Joe wouldn't like dancing with his bum leg. Suddenly she knew where she wanted to go. "Never mind," she said to the driver, "make it Schenley Park." When they got to the entrance to the park, "Right here," she said, and they were walking along.

She had an image in her mind, "their" bench—she shot a glance at him to see if he was aware of where they were. He was perfectly aware. They sat down.

She kept her eyes down, but she knew he was looking at her.

"I hate mystery," he said.

"It's no mystery," she said.

"Well, what is it?"

She tried to answer, found her throat lumping up.

He was looking at her, she could feel it, it was almost as if her cheek was extremely sensitive to him. She heard him laugh, a rather mocking cynical laugh. "What?" she said.

"Well," he said, "you don't seem to like it when I don't want to marry you. And you don't seem to like it when I do."

She nodded, she could see it from his point of view. She tried to say something, her throat closed up.

"Well," he said, "say something."

"Put your arm around me, Joe."

He put his arm around her.

"Tighter, Joe."

She found herself dissolving, sinking into the comfort, oblivion of his embrace. She felt his cheek near her, but he was holding back, he was sore, she could tell. But something began to work, his lips were near her, she felt his lips brushing her face. "Stell," he murmured, "Stell, baby."

He was kissing her. As he kissed her he looked at her. Her eyes were starting to swim. It was quite wonderful to him, the way her eyes would unfold, revealing her love, her sex, her soul . . . she leaned back, her passion began to contort her face, her mouth moving this way and that, sometimes he thought she was more beautiful that way, he loved feeling he could make her feel. "Please," she said.

"Please, what?"

Her eyes swam away. "I don't know." She shook herself, sat up sharply. "Look," she said, "I admit it. I guess you could do anything you want. But do me a favour—don't."

"Why?"

"It only makes it harder."

"Now look," he said, "what's this all about?"

She tried, he could see her trying, but she shook her head.

"Now look. Goddam it," he said, pressing her hands, "you've got to tell me. Is it some other man?"

"Oh for God's sake," she said wildly. Her hand flew to her forehead, she looked around, as if somewhere, in the bushes, in the trees, she would find something that would help her.

"Come on, Stell," he said, pressing her hands.

Slowly she began to tell him. How she had wanted the baby. She didn't have to have it, she wanted it.

Then after the baby was born, how her mother went on about compensation. How she went to Stoney Pike——

"Stoney Pike!" He remembered him, the tall, hawk-faced figure from around the blocks.

Her first visit to Stoney. The second——

"Did he seem after you?"

She nodded.

"Then why did you go back?"

"The compensation. And I wanted to find out about you."

He felt now a strange guilt that he hadn't written. He could have made the allotment, prevented all this. "Go on," he said.

Stoney's proposition——

"What did you say?"

"No."

You said no, said something inside of him, but he said, "Go on."

"Then he had my father fired."

"Had your father fired?" It was too much, too hard to believe. He had known Stoney Pike, known him in childhood. In fact, Stoney, if he was not mistaken, had had a hand in his father's collapse, when his father's inventions were out on the street . . . but that was business, he could understand.

"Go on," he said.

"Then I tried to get a job." She told him how she had seen Constable Murowski hanging around the department store, how she was fired.

I be a sonofabitch, he said to himself. I'm in the Pacific, and this stuff happens here.

"Go on," he said.

She told how her mother got a job. "Where?" he said.

"The Fiske Building."

"Go on."

It was getting harder . . . how her father kept looking at her, his eyes saying: you are the cause of my trouble.

Finally she went to Stoney.

"Why?"

"To ask him to let my father go back to work."

A strange coldness came over him. "Go on," he said.

She couldn't, it seemed now it was too much. "Oh my God, please, I'm not asking anything of you," she said.

He took her hands, kept pressing them, twisting them. "Go on."

"You're hurting me," she cried, flinging her hands out of his grasp. "First it's him, then it's you——"

"I'm sorry," he murmured, "go on."

"Well, that's all . . . he did it," she said.

He shuddered. For a moment he felt his stomach turn. He saw that Jap woman sniper on Guadalcanal, they had all looked at her, but nobody had touched her.

"You let him," he said.

She shook her head.

"Don't give me that," he said, "then how?"

"He hit me."

"Where?"

She pointed to her chin, the back of her neck.

"Aw," he said, half turning away, not believing, not wanting to believe.

"He did," she said. "Goddam it, don't you believe me? He hit me there."

"Where?"

"Right here. And here and here and here," she was indicating the back of her neck, her belly, her chin.

He was beginning to believe her. She was bent forward, sobbing, her head in her hands, the long beautiful arch of her back racked by sobs. He thought of something—how she, out on Guadal, had come to him. And he, here in Pittsburgh, what was he doing for her?

"I'm sorry, Stell," he murmured, but he felt extremely futile. He also felt the misery of his girl scummed up, his baby scummed up. But through this misery something like a steel drill, wanting to know, wanting to drill through to the end of it.

"Then what?" he said.

"I did what I could to get rid of it."

"And then?"

"The next day my old man went back to work." She thought of how she had sickened of stores and perfume counters, of how she had wanted to help him, out there, and taken a course that fitted her to be a welder . . . but she let it go, what was the use?

If only he would say one word, one word that would make her feel better, less alone . . . and he too felt something like that, but he couldn't. He was filled not only with misery and indignation but with the things with which he had lived, the men with whom he had lived and the ones who died, the ones who talked about some dame in San Diego, and the ones who just cried when they thought of the girl back there, and the guy who sang, mockingly, I wonder who's kissing you now. . . .

He felt too, as he always did in excitement or pain, not merely the grind of his arm wound, but that malarial track, as if his body, his soul, was on two or three cycles of electricity, each current charging at a different rate. Good grief, he thought, what she's been through, and here I am, sorry for me.

"Come on, Stell," he said, wanting to put his hand on her, somehow comfort her. But she too, feeling a depth of misery, discouragement, merely shook her head, shook it away.

They sat there for quite a time. Then she dried her eyes.

They looked at each other, he nodded to her, she nodded to him, it was time to go.

For all he felt about her, and for all his feeling that he must be a heel to think of himself— This is a hell of a return of a soldier, he said to himself.

CHAPTER II

THE FIGHT

WHEN JOE LEFT STELLA, he went to a cheap hotel. And sat there in a daze.

One thing he had learned, not to go off half-cocked. The next day he looked into things. The baby had been born 280 days from the night he had gone away. Stoney had been to Marine Headquarters, asking about him. Her father had been fired from the mill. It was true, all true.

He had within himself a thing he called the Window. The Window opened into the Pacific . . . he saw Ronnie, the Greek, Slats, and Red. Good God, guys had fought and died for this kind of stuff.

He thought of the inventions he wanted to make, of the thousand bucks he had saved in order to get started, of Mom up on the farm. Well, all that would have to wait.

It was morning. He got up, put on his uniform, went out.

He found himself in Mill District, standing before a window:

J. STONEHAM PIKE

ALDERMAN	<i>Marriage Licences Issued</i>
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE	<i>Auto Tags, 24 hr. Service</i>
W. MUROWSKI, CONSTABLE	<i>Operator's Licence</i>
TOMMY NOWAK, DEPUTY	<i>Notary Public</i>
FELIX GRAEME, LAWYER	<i>Real Estate, Insurance</i>

To himself, Joe was saying: you're in plenty businesses, aren't you, you sonofabitch?

He remembered another business the guy was in, foreclosing inventors for a grocery bill. And having the inventor committed if Mr. Osmond wanted him committed.

And another business, getting girls. He remembered something of his childhood, his father and mother talking about Stoney, when he came in they clammed up. Even then he knew they were talking about Stoney and girls. Hm, Stoney had done stuff like this before.

He wasn't going to take it. You don't fight a war to come back to this.

He had been filled full of Indoctrination. The C.O. gave it to 'em, right before they hit the beach. Not the kind of indoctrination they handed out in camps. But Indoctrination. The rape of Pearl Harbor, Manchukuo, Nanking . . . by Jesus Christ, the rape of Stell.

What difference does it make if the guy isn't a Jap? Does he have to be a Jap? Suppose the sonofabitch is a Pittsburgh Squire? Suppose he pulls that kind of stuff right here?

Well, brother, then the war is on here.

Let's go. Only maybe he ought to have a gang. Stoney had a gang. Maybe he could pick up a coupla Marines. He used to know a coupla guys that worked in the mills. But he'd have to tell 'em why. No good.

One-man detail.

He could get the Squire in a hallway, hit him with a lead pipe. Only he didn't want to. As much as he hated him, as much as he wanted to tear him apart, he didn't want to kill him. Killing was too good for the sonofabitch. He wanted to beat him up, break his nose, knock out his teeth. And do it in public, in his court, where people could see—and as he slapped him around, he'd tell 'em why.

Only, he wasn't so good any more. The right arm hurt, the malaria gremlin had been cycling around, and the leg, the leg. And he began to lose vision when he got mad, his field of vision narrowed down, he saw red. So——

Let's go. "Let's go, let's go"—he heard the Marine cry, he remembered how he and Ron urged each other on with that "Let's go, let's go." O.K., Ronnie, here goes one for the civilization you kept talking about. Other guys just died, but you picked what you wanted to die for. So, Ronnie, here's for you.

Come on, team. Let's go.

He entered the store.

He saw the LAWYER and the CONSTABLE signs, and the guys hanging around, just as she said. He passed beyond the partition, saw the Squire's court, Stoney up on the bench. He recognized Wladek Murowski, the neighbourhood strong boy. And Oddie Simmons.

He had gone to school with Oddie Simmons, though Oddie was in a higher grade. Oddie had a skin as pale as lard, two venomous black eyes, and a sunken chest. He used to kick old ladies in the shins and snatch their pocketbooks. There were a number of other onhangers; going by her description, the old guy might be Ward Chairman Schikerle and the punks maybe were the Numbers writers, Willie Manioni and Eddie Psalski. Good Christ, and he and Ron and other guys had been in a shell hole, machine-gunned and bleeding for guys like this.

Wladek Murowski, of the hard green eyes, went to the front of the store. One less.

Joe found Stoney looking at him, possibly attracted by the uniform. Those oyster eyes fastened on him. "That Marine there," Stoney said, pointing to him. "Guess we ought to extend courtesy to the uniform."

Joe went forward, stood at the desk. Stoney was amiable enough, his large hands with the blue veins folded before him,

his long predatory nose hanging down over his lips, his greyish eyes with a gleam of pleasantness.

"Well, young man," he said, "what can I do for you?"

Joe swayed a little. "You can take that"—suddenly he smacked Stoney across the face. Stoney, shaken by the unexpected assault, tried to lean back. Joe hurled himself over the desk, got hold of him before he could get away, smacked him. "There you are, you sonofabitch, cornered, like you cornered her. You think I went to fight for that, you sonofabitch?" He got to his feet, pulled Stoney up, smacked him. Stoney, squirming this way and that, was about to call for help, but Joe hit him over the mouth. "Over the mouth, you bastard, like you gave it to her, and over the neck." And he cracked him over the neck. "And here's one for my old man while I'm about it."

Stoney, beaten, collared, rocked, knew he was in deep trouble. Cornered as he was, he was unable to defend himself; every time he opened his mouth he got a dazing blow in the face. "I'm going to give you the beating of your life, you sonofabitch," Joe was shouting. "I'll tear you in half. I'll murder you!" The blood lust was coming over him as he saw blood spurting from Stoney's mouth. "Bleed, you sonofabitch, bleed, like you made her bleed."

Meanwhile Stoney's fuglemen had come running, first the punks Eddie Pstalski and Oddie Simmons, but Joe, jerking Stoney this way and that, holding him with his left hand, cracked his right to Eddie Pstalski's chin. And holding Stoney with two hands, meanwhile jouncing him up and down, kicked Oddie's shins. "That's for the old ladies," he said. Oddie screamed. Stoney, with great wilful resolve, emitted little more than a strong man's grunt, kept his mouth clamped, except when it poured blood. He was looking for a chance—now he broke loose, lunged at his antagonist.

Joe suddenly saw the inkstand on the desk. "Take that, you ugly sonofabitch," and he pushed the inkstand into Stoney's face, his face now a monstrous conglomeration of torn flesh, ink, blood—

By now Stoney's major fuglemen, the constables Nowak and Murowski, attracted by the commotion, various people in court crying, "Oo, he's beatin' the Squire, moider, he's moiderin' the Squire," rushed into the fray. Joe knew they were good, in a minute he wouldn't know what to do, and grabbing Stoney,

"Comere you sonofabitch, lemme get you where"—he wanted him out in the clear, out in the court, where he could use him as a shield against the others.

But Stoney, who somehow retained his senses through all this, strong as he was, though old, managed to cling to his desk, holding on to it with his great hands, and now that his real fuglemen had come, "Clear the court," he yelled, "clear the court."

"Oh," said Joe, "so you don't want 'em to know, you're afraid, you bastard, well, take that and"—he had Stoney's head down on the desk, was beating him, choking him. Suddenly he felt a conk on the head, and something wet. Tommy Nowak had thrown the big brass spittoon. Joe felt water dripping on him, on the Marine uniform, something began to blaze before him, this was it, red, red like on Guadal, and the enemy through the red haze. "Comere you," and he had Stoney again, one hand holding him by the belt, the other punching him, smashing his ribs, the belt hand pushing Stoney this way, that way, propelling him against those who were trying to help him. Stoney himself now, like a cornered rat, showing his teeth, trying to lunge at him, get his hands on his throat, those big gnarled hands out now——

"Back," and Joe smacked him back.

"Pool cues," Stoney yelled to his fuglemen. He was spitting blood and a big front tooth. "Pool cues," he yelled. "Pool cues."

Wladek Murowski, rushing to the back room, came out with a pool cue. It was long enough to reach the guy, jab the guy, smack the guy. "Wow, Christ"—it was Joe, he got the pool cue over the arm, the wounded arm.

Big fat Tommy Nowak, with the great glittering eyes, rushed up with a pool cue. Joe got it away from him, started beating Stoney with it. But the other cues interfered with his, now they all had cues. Joe saw what seemed like a forest of pool cues descending upon him, the heavy handles of the cues smacking him, cracking him, he dodged——

One chance, Joe thought, one chance of getting out, if he released Stoney for a moment—— He shot Stoney at them, some of the pool cues fell on Stoney. Joe now behind the desk, his two hands on the desk—as Nowak, Pstalski, and Oddie came at him, he pushed the desk over at them, for a moment he leaped at Stoney, he was going to give him the beating of his life, break

his teeth, break his ribs, grab him, run him out on the street, take his clothes off—

Wham—somebody hit him back of the neck, then back of the head. He was going down, he knew, and to himself: up, you bastard, up! Let's go—wham, wham!

Like dull thuds, almost like the slam of big waves against the shore, wham, wham . . . for a moment it was like the night of the red haze, he and Ron in the shell hole, and the Jap fleet pumping it in, a great red flash tearing through the red haze, exploding on them . . . then the sensation of sinking, sinking.

And that was all.

He felt a throbbing in the head, which got worse. And a sick sensation in the stomach. And that splintered feeling below the knee. And that grinding, like engines, in his head. He felt he was in the shell hole, with orders: hold on.

And nothing to hold on to.

He opened his eyes. It took considerable effort. The first thing he saw was a floor, a wooden floor. He couldn't be sure, so he felt it. Yep, a floor.

The throbbing in his head did something to his eyes. Then he began to see. What he saw was an enormous leg, the enormous leg of a table, a pool table. He saw the rack for balls, the coloured balls with their numbers, 8, 6, 13.

This must be the back room at Stoney's she had told him about . . . yep, it was. And there was Stoney, with his whole troupe around him. At first he thought Stoney was naked, but he wasn't. His head was bandaged, he was stripped to the waist, they were taping his chest—his gang and a guy they called Doc.

Through his still blinking eyes Joe could see the Doc doing the taping, the gang helped, held the scissors, shook their heads when Stoney winced, said, "Jeez, boss." Then the Doc tore off another piece of tape, they held Stoney's sides in when the Doc got ready to tape.

Stoney must have ribs cracked or broken or something. The Doc said, "You'll have to have an X-ray." He recognized the Doc now, he had known him by sight, a Doc from around the blocks, small, plump, dark, with dark eyes, Dr. Tartaglia.

What you could see of Stoney's face was all cleaned up; now one of the guys brought him a fresh shirt, they helped him put it

on, tied his tie for him. He was, Joe thought, a strong old man; as a matter of fact, toward the last he had gotten some pretty good punches in himself.

The front of his mouth was just the faintest bit bloody, one tooth was missing. But now, with his coat on, he sat, strong, hurt, contemptuous, his cold grey eyes staring down in judgment.

Joe saw the Doc pointing to him, and to Stoney, "What do we do about him?"

"Nothing," and Stoney waved the Doc out.

The Doc went. Stoney indicated a wet towel, indicated that one of his gang should throw it to the man on the floor.

Joe got the towel in the face, wiped his face, tried to get up. He couldn't make it, managed to prop his back up against the wall. He realized his coat was open, a little torn.

Tommy Nowak pointed to him, saying, "What do we do, boss, give him the boot?"

This was an underworld term, it meant kicking a man till his ribs were broken, till he was crazy or dead.

They all looked to Stoney. Christ, Joe thought, what'll I do if they start that, but Stoney, his eyes thoughtful, merely shook his head.

The guy was a Marine, he was thinking. Decorated. Back from the Pacific. (While he was lying on the floor, knocked out, they had had a look at his papers.) People might know about him, there might be an awful stink. This once it was better to do it the legal way.

"Call Officer Stratton," he said.

Oddie Simmons went to do his bidding.

Stoney looked at the man on the floor. His dark eyes were encircled by shiners, he had a couple of split lips, the Silver Star. What the hell did he think he was, a hero or something? To start all this on account of a Polack girl.

But he felt nothing but contempt, and a tightness and hurt in his chest. As for the rest, he'd make the guy sweat. Send him up for a good stiff sentence. But outside of that, make him sweat.

He thought of something, River House. And the Captain there, Delehanty. They had been friends. It wasn't like the old days, but Delehanty would play with him. Of course he could send the boy to an outlying lock-up, where he would never be heard from. But

being a Marine and the inventor's son, that wouldn't do. He could pull this trick near down-town. Not only would he have the guy locked up, but he would take a good long time about it preferring charges. The guy would go crazy, thinking.

When Officer Stratton came (a tall blond man with an American face, and a quality about him of being a decent customer), Stoney said, "Well, Officer, we've had a bit of trouble here."

Officer Stratton, who had been told about it by Oddie, said, "So I see."

He made a note of the shambled court, of the Squire's troubles, the bandaged head, the tooth, the bruised and bandaged face, the taped ribs, he put down the name of the doctor. Now he exchanged a few words with the constables, Nowak and Murowski. "Must be drunk or crazy," Murowski said.

Joe Drew said nothing. The time, he thought, would come.

Stratton bent over him. "Well, young fellah," he said, "can you get up?"

Joe tried it . . . with Officer Stratton's help he made it. He had taken some powerful smacks over the back with the pool cues. The pool cues, with one exception, he noticed, were all neatly racked. The one exception was bloody, it had been exhibited to Officer Stratton, he had made a note of it.

Joe stood swaying, Stratton holding him. Stoney was indicating him, and to Stratton said, "Officer, take him over to River House. Tell the Captain I'll send the charges along."

Officer Stratton nodded. He started, Joe faltered. "I've got a car outside," Officer Stratton said.

Joe nodded, with Officer Stratton's help lurched through the court. Stratton stopped, glanced at the overturned desk, the broken chairs, the inkwell on the floor, the spilled ink. "Well, young fellah, you certainly did a job," he said.

There was no approbation in it, merely recognition of a one-man wrecking job.

Joe's white hat was on the floor, Officer Stratton picked it up, put it on Joe's head.

They went outside. There was a crowd around, people who had been in the court and others. "O.K.," Officer Stratton said, "break it up." And to Joe, "Let's go," and he led him to the police car.

And so Joe Drew, out of Pittsburgh to Guadalcanal, out of

Guadalupe to Pittsburgh, found himself on the way to River House.

It was strange, he was thinking, his father had been in River House.

CHAPTER III

RIVER HOUSE STATION

JOE WAS A PRETTY sick boy when he got to River House. He was given first aid, led to a cell. He slept.

When he got up he felt better. He was in a cell by himself. There was a leaky toilet in a corner, a metal funnel really, with water dripping down.

Three of the walls of the cell were made of bars. The fourth, the back wall, was a thick slab of slate. It had writing scribbled on it, stuff like You'll Be Sorry, several telephone numbers, some drawings of girls with moustaches and whiskers.

There was also a list of dates, and high-water marks, the marks indicating how high the water had been on various occasions, particularly '36, '41. The water in his cell, Joe could see, had risen above his head.

Nice going. For the first time he had an acute sense of where he was. He was at River House, an old station, down by the river. Not far from where the Allegheny meets the Monongahela and forms the Ohio. As Pittsburgh was often ruled by flood, the waters often occupied this old station. Of course, Joe thought, they probably evacuated prisoners.

But hell, why think of that? He would call Stell. Or send a note to Mom. Or—oh boy, this was Uncle Charlie's chance to be a help.

Uncle Charlie was composing-room foreman on the *Clarion*. He was Mom's brother, but he had none of Mom's stiffness. He was a charming little guy, and had been Pop's pal. Many a time in the old days, when Pop was up against it, Uncle Charlie had forked over to pay the patent costs, or sometimes, just for the eats. And, he remembered, when he was kicking around Pittsburgh, lonely as a mule, he could always count on Uncle Charlie for Sunday dinner. Uncle Charlie was a right guy. And maybe just

the man for the job. He could get the reporters on the *Clarion* to advise him, they would know which lawyer to get, which bondsman, he was set.

When the turnkey, a big fat guy with a pale, doughy, womanish face and two brown, moral, suspicious eyes, came along—"Say, mister," Joe said, "I'd like to make a call."

The turnkey just looked at him with those suspicious eyes, as cold as your Aunt Sarah when you mentioned sex, said nothing, and walked away.

It was, Joe thought, a nice friendly place.

"What's this?" he said, more or less to the man in the cell on his left. The man was a Negro, he had a skin of a light brown chocolate consistency, he wore thin spectacles, he had an isolated, brooding, intellectual look.

"I don't know," the Negro answered in a rather aloof way. "It's a white man's world. You figure it out."

Joe was annoyed. Inside himself he said, damn nigger, and subsided. Coffee was clunked down before him, later he had soup and an indifferent stew. He saw that some of the prisoners had quite an influence here, sending out for cigarettes, for good meals from restaurants.

The place was full of drunks, perverts, drunk drivers, habitual criminals. All these men could be friendly enough, if you were interested in their type of work or willing to discuss the South Pacific campaign.

Joe wasn't anxious to discuss the South Pacific campaign, he didn't feel like a criminal, he wasn't interested in their type of work. These people, like Stoney and his gang, were people he had fought for, and seen others die for, and he wasn't particularly proud of it. He didn't want their confidence or their advice, he just wanted to get out.

He tried a couple of other turnkeys, who gave him the unresponsive stare. Now he realized the Negro in the next cell was looking at him, wanting to talk to him. "Listen, mister," the Negro said, "you don't look like a bad man."

Joe shrugged.

"Listen, mister," the Negro said, "if you had it to do all over again, would you go in the war?"

Joe didn't know, after what he had seen, probably not. Still, if he had it all to do over again—"Maybe."

The coloured man's eyes, for all their intellectuality, seemed to have some inner beseeching light. "Do you think a coloured man ought to go in?"

Joe didn't know. After what he had been through he felt everybody ought to be in. "Why do you ask?"

And the coloured man told him. He had stolen something. "But I'm not a thief," he said. "I'm a music-arranger." And his fingers played a ghost piano, giving the idea. "I only stole in the hope of getting sent up, to get out of the war."

Joe just looked at him. Some cruel things formed in his mind . . . the man, his eyes beseeching, but beseeching some higher authority, said, "What has a coloured man got to fight for?"

Joe didn't know.

"They call me all kinds of a nigger sonofabitch, but they sing my songs," the coloured man said.

Joe nodded, he understood . . . guys in his family had shed their blood to make this guy free, to give him a chance, Grandpa Drew had been in the Civil War.

"Did you hear anything about the camps down South, do you know how they treat the coloured boys?" the man said.

Joe hadn't heard, but he could guess it wasn't so hot.

The coloured man looked at him. "Did you ever see a coloured man get a break?" he said.

Joe thought about it, he nodded. It was Bougainville. When the guys were brought out, wounded, the coloured guys were there, all spick and span to carry their stretchers. You'd think guys would be glad to see clean guys in clean uniforms as their stretcher-bearers, but they weren't. He heard the worst cursing of his life. "You — black bastards, why don't you go in there and fight?" the wounded screamed.

In truth, the coloured guys did want to go in there and fight. They had been asking for a chance to fight; finally they got it. They were put in a quiet sector, the idea was breaking in new troops. But the Japs heard about it. They turned practically all the heat on the coloured boys. "They'll run," some fellahs said. But they didn't. They held. And they made Bougainville.

And when they came out, bloody and grinning and torn, they were cheered. He told the guy about it; tears came to the guy's eyes. A little later, "All right, mister," the Negro said. And he asked the turnkey to send for his lawyer. The lawyer came, the

Negro said he would make restitution, and enter the Army if the charges were dropped . . . it all happened very quickly, and the light brown intellectual Negro was on his way.

O.K., Joe said to himself, only I'm no recruiting sergeant, I'd like to get out of here myself. "Aunt Sarah," as he thought of the doughy-faced turnkey, was gone; in his place now was the night man, a small crabbed man with a baleful eye, a prison pallor, and a pate as bald, pale, crinkled as pot cheese. The wise guys called him Jerry. "Say, Jerry," Joe said.

But the small crabbed Jerry merely gave him the baleful eye, shuffled away. Joe felt something was up. The Negro could get the help of the turnkey, various criminals could get the turnkeys to do their bidding. "What is this?" he said to the man on his right, by name Hal McClosky.

Hal McClosky was a professional criminal. He had been chatting through the bars all day, about one "stir" and another, the right "mouthpiece" to have in Wilkes-Barre, Oneonta, LaCrosse, the nature of the Captain at River House Station. . . . Joe had been short with McClosky earlier in the day. But now, with a "wise" forgiving eye, and the quality of: I knew you'd come around to me——

"Well," said McClosky, "have you noticed that outside of the dinge, there ain't been a mouthpiece in here all day?"

Joe hadn't noticed, but now that the fellah said so—"Is it usual for lawyers to be in here?"

McClosky gave him the wise, patient, forgiving eye. "It's usual."

"Well," said Joe, "how do you account for——"

"Has it occurred to you," McClosky said, "might be the Captain didn't want you to pick up a mouthpiece here?"

It hadn't occurred to him; he didn't see why the Captain should care.

"It couldn't be," McClosky said, a particular edge of wisdom in his eye, "somebody important would like to keep you locked up?"

Joe didn't know, he thought of Stoney.

"There is such a thing," said McClosky, "of not going around battering no Squire."

Joe looked at him. How did he know? But before he could ask, McClosky held up a white, skinny finger, said, "Just a minute, I wanna show you sompfin," and McClosky began a prison whisper through the bars. It went down the line; from way down Joe

saw a piece of paper being slipped from cell to cell, and finally to McClosky.

McClosky handed him a small piece of newspaper. Joe looked at it: Marine goes Berserk in Squire's Court. There was a small story, just a few lines.

Joe wondered how the clipping got into the jail. Then he remembered: earlier in the day one of the criminals had sent out for papers.

So, they had known about it all day, and said nothing. Probably because of his attitude. Well, he felt his attitude changing. "Look," he said to McClosky, "how do I get out?"

McClosky merely gave him the slightly bitter, experienced eye, said, "Was you booked?"

Joe thought back, it seemed that Officer Stratton merely said something to the Captain— He shook his head.

"Well," said McClosky, "if you ain't booked, you ain't here."

"No," said Joe, feeling a little like a rabbit in a magician's act, "where am I?"

McClosky screwed up his somewhat wizened face. "I don't know," he said, "you might be on your way to being the lost prisonah."

The lost prisoner, thought Joe. "What the hell is that?"

And McClosky told him. Sometimes a prisoner got "lost." That is, he was in jail. But as he hadn't been booked, why he was in jail or who wanted him there had long since been forgotten.

"What happens?" Joe said.

And McClosky explained. The turnkeys might have nothing against him. The Captain might have nothing against him. But just as there might be no reason for keeping him in, there was no reason for letting him out.

Joe swallowed. "Listen," he said to McClosky, "what do I do?"

"I don't know, Bud," McClosky said, "maybe you could start learnin' the 'Prisoner's Song.'"

And that was that. Not long after, McClosky was released. Joe found himself doing a bit of thinking.

One thing was becoming plain to him. The only man who could help him was the Captain. The Captain, William Marius Delehanty by name, was a big man, over six feet tall, broad-shouldered, with a strong, meditative Irish face and big, meditative hands. Joe had seen him, stalking down the corridor, saying

nothing, not even when spoken to by those who seemingly knew him, just glancing at them with the barest glance of his reddish, crusty eyes.

Somehow Joe found himself fascinated by the man, by his big, meditative face and big hands. The hands seemed to clench and unclench, automatically, as if with the habit of years. Joe had heard stories of old patrolmen, patrolling the winter beat, with pieces of cardboard in the hands, clenching and unclenching the hands, squeezing the cardboard, building up the muscles of the hands and arms.

But the clenching and unclenching hands were not the most interesting thing about Captain Delehanty. What was interesting about him were his eyes, reddish-brown eyes, once the eyes of a peasant, possibly a brute, that had been shaded and informed by some inner suffering.

Joe hadn't spoken to him because he hoped to clear through the turnkeys. But now that he had no hope of them, he was determined to speak to the Captain.

There was something wan about the men and the night. The men had stopped chirping through the bars, and now, pale, worn, and squeezed-out looking, as if they had worked hard all day, one by one dropped off to sleep. Snore filled the pale, blinking, toilet-gurgling inferno. At the sound of the grate rattling up front, Joe took heart again. But it was only another drunk being put away for the night.

He slept. The next day he again sounded the guards, got no more than the distant, distrustful stare. All day he waited. He was beginning to champ. A certain strange naturalness seemed to come over his surroundings. He was beginning to see that you could live this way. After all, you got some kind of food. You weren't ill-treated. You could strike up some kind of acquaintanceship. You could even start drawing your invention on the wall . . . but it palled on him. He wanted the real thing, a product that could go into production, not a sickly dream on a prison wall.

And Stell, Stell.

The gate rattled, the gate between the police station and the prison. Captain Delehanty was coming down the corridor. When the Captain came by his cell——

"Captain," Joe said, standing by the bars, "may I speak to you?"

The brown eyes settled upon him, crusty, smouldering, like brown slag with fire in it. The Captain said, "I'll see." Then he went along.

"I'll see." That from the Captain was something. Joe was beginning to have some sense of how much his freedom depended on the Captain.

The Captain, William Marius Delehanty, whose long period of service on the Force had inclined him to think little of the various weaklings, perverts, and malefactors who landed behind the bars of River House, was passingly interested in the Marine. He had a son in the Service himself, but that was not all. He was not, as were some of the captains and lock-up chiefs of Pittsburgh, a moron, an imbecile, or a totally inhuman man. He had lived a life which had become quite miserable and a torture to him, a matter of domestic difficulty. As was well known in Pittsburgh, his paramour was a woman who kept a house, a blonde, an ash-blond, a Jewess, and seemingly ageless.

How the Captain had met this woman, and how this relationship had triumphed over home, family, and his scruples as a Catholic was a long story indeed. But for immediate purposes, it was this relationship that had softened him, that had made him aware, he knew now that the world wasn't cut from one piece, there were many different sorts of people and patterns. He understood, now, something Jesus Christ had understood: mercy, compassion, the strange and infinite make-up of the world.

It had come about through his relationship with the woman. The woman, or his passion for her, or that he just couldn't live without her, had been his cross. And he saw now, in his whole brutal, scheming career as a policeman, that each man has his cross.

He understood now, but what good did it do, he was a chief jailer in a lock-up. He was in fact more. By political agreement, he, William Marius Delehanty, was king in his domain.

He had been called by another king, a king for whom he had nothing but contempt. For William Marius Delehanty was a strong man, and in his own crooked way he felt he was on the square. That is, he put the cards on the table. The man who didn't, who was also a king, was the Squire, the politician, the low life, Stoney Pike.

He and Stoney had been friends. Stoney had called him and said, "Captain, I'm sending a Marine over there. By Officer Stratton. Now lock this fellah up, see? And don't treat him good."

"O.K.," Delehanty said. "What got into the fellah?"

"I don't know," said Stoney, "drunk, I guess, maybe crazy."

From his glimpse of the young man, the Captain didn't think so. And so the Captain took an interest, not a large interest, but an interest in the prisoner, the Marine. Anybody who beat up Stoney interested him; if you asked him, it wouldn't matter if Stoney were dead. Not that he had anything against Stoney; still, Stoney was no good.

Ah yes, they had been friends, he and Stoney. And years ago, in the old days, when some of the city officials, judges and the like, went on hunting trips, he and Stoney had gone along. And he had helped Stoney to many a piece of nookie and coozie he was always talking about.

He had nothing against Stoney; the city being what it was, there were worse than that. But Stoney had once passed a remark. And it got back to him, the way those things do, the remark was about him, and why he took up with a Jew whore.

Now it was funny, but in all that, some of his own bad language came splattering back at him. He himself had once called her the Jew whore, called her that for years. And his wife, Biddy, the big, dark, sombre one, who hated the blonde, she too called her the "whore woman."

But he didn't like it from Stoney. His resentment had to do with his suffering. Yes, he was Captain here, and by virtue of something in his own life, something bad and strange, he had risen to quite a domain in Pittsburgh.

But he had paid a price. And part of the price had to do with Lil, and his passion for her. But his passion was open, on the level. The whole city knew it. And it was known in Chicago, and St. Louis and Seattle, where he had gone to police conventions, and she with him. Yes, like a real honest affection, association, crucifixion, whatever it was, the whole world knew it. Of course, there were millions of fools who knew nothing, who merely ate and worked and slept, but the people in the know, the smart people, the priests, the politicians and the newspaper people, Osmond the Steel King, and what the newspapers called "the sporting fraternity"—they all knew.

Knew that he, William Marius Delehanty, lived with, was the protector of, had been for years, and would be till his last day on earth—the lover, the friend, the eternal devoted something of the woman.

To hell with 'em. But Stoney, now, with his bony face, his oyster eyes, and his ferret ways—a dirty man, even out in the fields, on the hunting trip, even as pheasants flushed, nookie, nookie, nookie, that was all he could think about. He was a dirty man, Stoney was, not a clean man at all, but a dirty man, really a dirty, black-hearted Protestant. This was no time for such things, with the war and all, and he had known plenty of Protestants, and they were all right. But he could see how way back, unbelievers and dirty men like Stoney, with their godless ways, had led people away from the Fold.

Anyway, he was dirty and black-hearted, Stoney was. And the boy had beaten him up.

Now there was something else. It was plain Stoney meant to hold him without bail. That was more or less against the law. Not that he, Captain Delehanty, hadn't held fellahs without bail. But radicals, Jews, Communists, that sort of thing. And there was one fellah, the Anarchist—but he didn't want to think about that.

But holding a Marine, now. A hero. By the medal, you could see. The Legion might get interested. Or the papers. Not that that worried him. But two parties had come to see him about the boy.

The first was a Polish girl, young and pretty, but she seemed all right. She wanted to see him, help him, bail him out. And, looking her in the eye, he had said, "Do you know any reason why he should beat up the Squire?"

You should have seen the blue eyes hold steady; with that deliberate steadiness the girl had given herself away. She said, "No, sir." He said, "Come back in a couple of days."

The second party had been two parties, really. There was a little man, grey, with pretty blue eyes and a lot of charm and dignity. There was something about him, like a leprechaun, or one of them spry little priests. Now that I think of it, he looked like a priest, with that paper cap on his head, the kind printers wear, a paper biretta. He was composing-room foreman on the *Clarion*. "I'm his Uncle Charlie," he said.

He had seen the squib in the paper, he had printed it.

The other man with him, helping him like, was Ned Woolbine,

the newspaper writer. Not one of your cheap, district men, but a real writer. He was a distinguished man, Mr. Woolbine was, not merely in his accomplishment, but in himself. You felt it. He looked like one of those sensible big businessmen, even features, brusque moustache, big dark eyes.

"This Joe Drew," Uncle Charlie said, "he's the son of a man used to be well known in Pittsburgh. He's Jumper Drew's son."

Delehanty felt an inside click, but keeping his big pale, muscular face impassive, he nodded.

Ned Woolbine was looking at him, he had the look of an important man, Mr. Woolbine had, as if he could make trouble. "This isn't one of those cases, is it," he said, "where a man is held indefinitely?"

The Captain looked back into those big, dark, sombre eyes. "There's nobody held that way, Mr. Woolbine," he said.

Woolbine just gave him the sombre-eyed stare. "Suppose we send Lawyer Jordan in here?"

"Now, Mr. Woolbine, I'd keep my pants on," the Captain said. "I can't do anything till I see what the charges are."

"What are you holding him on?" Woolbine said.

"On the word, Mr. Woolbine, of one of our city officials, Squire Pike."

"And how long," Woolbine said, "will it be till he sends the information in?"

"That, Mr. Woolbine," the Captain said, "I wouldn't know."

Woolbine nodded, quite plainly wise to the game. But to Uncle Charlie, with an air of: we'll see what they try to make of this—"We'll be back in a day or two," he said. And he and Uncle Charlie went away, leaving behind them the heavy, oppressive suspicions of Mr. Woolbine and his years of newspaper experience.

So, it was the son of Jumper Drew. He had had the Jumper in here. Mr. Osmond wanted him held for a sanity hearing. And there was no doubt of it, by that time the old man was gone. Not that he was so old, he just looked old. His hair was all white, and fell about his shiny scalp. And his eyes—the goddamdest eyes you ever saw. Grey, with a violet tinge. Like he had seen just twice in his life, once on the sea, coming over, when the water got that violet tinge. And in the woman's eyes, Lil's eyes.

Well, anyway, the Jumper was in the cell here. And outside of his missus and some inventors, quite a personality had come to

see him. Billy Mitchell, no less, the great general of the air, the cashiered general, the general who told us what to do if we wanted to keep out of this miserable war, but we wouldn't listen to him . . . anyway, the Jumper and Mitchell were talking, and himself, Captain Delehanty, stood looking on.

"You know, Billy," the Jumper said, "they can't run planes without my stabilizer." Mitchell nodded. "You know, Billy, we have to have a large bomber that can fly to Japan." Mitchell nodded. "You know, Billy, these bastards have stolen my stuff and sold it to Japan." Mitchell nodded.

The Jumper lost control. "They've hounded me," he said, "they've driven me crazy. Osmond and the rest of them have driven me out just as they drove you out." The Jumper's voice cracked, the rest was just gibberish.

The next day the Jumper was committed.

So, this Marine was the Jumper's son. Well, he'd speak to him. He pressed the buzzer for Sergeant Lucas. "Sergeant," he said, "the Marine in Number 3, bring him in."

Despite his desire to see the Captain, Joe was a little suspicious when they brought him in. He looked at the large man behind the desk, his pale face bent over some papers. He was a real redhead, Joe was thinking, despite the greying quality of his slightly curly red hair. He had big red eyebrows, red freckles, the pallid skin that so often goes with redheads, and a strong, muscular face. Now, having shuffled the papers enough to suit him, he raised his reddish, crusty eyes. There was in those eyes, Joe thought, some inner inflammation, an inflammation of the mind. . . . "Are you," the policeman was saying, "the son of the inventor Drew?"

Joe nodded.

"The one," the Captain said, "who flew around?" And his hand, pointing aloft, carried out the idea.

Joe nodded.

He don't speak, the Captain said to himself. Aloud he said, looking at the blue uniform, the Silver Star, "I understand you've been honourably discharged."

Joe wondered how he knew; he didn't know the gang at Stoney's had gone through his papers. "Yes, sir."

"You wouldn't be having the paper on you now?" 'This was

police stuff, the Captain never took anything for granted until he saw it. Joe handed him the paper. The Captain looked at it, handed it back. "Let me ask you," he said, "why did you beat up the Squire?"

Joe thought of the Book. The Book said that if captured by the enemy, say nothing. He wasn't certain the Captain was the enemy. But, at the same time, he didn't feel like shooting off his face. "I had good reason," he said.

Good reason, eh? The Captain flicked his eye at him, he knew what the reason was. The girl wouldn't say and the fellah wouldn't say. One of Stoney's dirty tricks. So the fellah beat him up for it.

He looked at him, tall, dark, manly, with a little flare coming into his eye—and Joe looked at him. He got something, he got it out of the policeman's fire-slag eyes, out of his pale face, out of his moody indecision. He felt the Captain wanted to help him, had the impulse to help him, yet the impulse was held down by a leaden heart, a leaden life. . . . I've got to give him a push, he said to himself. The Captain, watching him, saw him firming himself, his eyes live and tense—

"Captain, why don't you let me out of here?"

The Captain to himself: why should I? "You don't ask much," he said.

The young man was smiling, in a pleading way, his rather handsome face persuasive—and with a friendly flash of his eye, "You've got nothing against me," he said.

The policeman, keeping his face still: how do you know? he said to himself.

"Come on, Captain," Joe said, smiling, impatient, "I know you wanna give me a break." He knew it, he felt it, it raced round him with that malarial race. . . .

The Captain: he musta been born with a caul, he said to himself; he smiled a bit now, his faded lips a firm sideways streak. "You're not aimin' to talk your way out of here, young fellah?"

Joe smiled. "Well, Captain, there doesn't seem to be any other way." The Captain smiled. Joe said, "What the hell, Captain, you can't hold me this way for ever. Why not give me a chance to get out, give me a break? I haven't any record or anything. And as far as the Squire is concerned"—the policeman saw his jaw set, his eyes flash a mean fire—"he had it coming to him."

To himself: I've no doubt of it, the Captain thought. "Now listen, young fellah," he said. "I wouldn't mind giving you a break—that is, if it could be done." He looked into Joe's eyes. "Have you got a lawyer?"

Joe shook his head.

"Well, you'll need one," the Captain said. "Your Uncle Charlie and Mr. Woolbine were here this afternoon." (He saw the boy break into a glad grin, as if saying: good old Uncle Charlie!) "They talked about getting you Bennie Jordan. Do you know him?"

Joe shook his head.

"Well, he's a good lawyer," the Captain said. And then, as if throwing a punch at him, "He's a Jew."

Joe said nothing. As a youth in the days of America's despair, he had been swept by various tides about Jews. Also, on Guadalcanal he had seen Barney Ross go into battle, without training, and he knew why. . . . He said nothing.

He don't say yes and he don't say no, the Captain thought. "Now listen," he said. "You go back to your cell, and I'll see what I can do."

Joe thanked him, the Captain pressed the buzzer, Sergeant Lucas took the young man back to his cell.

Well, come on, Big Talk, the Captain said to himself, do something. It was not easy for him. The Captain was a deeply wounded man. And haunted too. Every night something came back to him—a vision of the man he had killed. And thoughts of his wife too, the great black Biddy (the Black Irish) with her eternal knuckle-cracking, sobbing, and tale-telling. And how it had, in a measure, separated him from his Church, at least from the priests. And this damnable life, pimps, whores, murderers, thieves. And that great cross in his heart, the woman he loved, and yet left in that life. However, like a strong man, William Delchanty tried to sweep all that away. One good deed he could do in his miserable haunted life, help a young fellah out, a soldier, a Marine.

But that too wasn't easy. In the "police business" you did business with men like Stoney, with Squires, politicians, men of the city. That's how the city was rigged. And whatever you might feel about Stoney, he was there, the standard thing of the city.

The Marine, a uniform and a medal, was here to-day and gone to-morrow.

And still . . . come on, Big Talk, the Captain said to himself, do something.

He called Stoney. "Look, Stone," he said, "I don't know how it happened. But Mr. Woolbine's found out about this thing, his paper is set to raise hell."

What of it? Stoney thought. I'll take him to court, and fry him there. It would be from the frying-pan into the fire. "What do you want?" he said.

"The Information, and make it quick," the Captain said.

And so it was, through the good deed of a man struggling for redemption, that Joe Drew was helped out of jail. It was exceedingly strange to him. Locked up in his cell, seeing nothing but the pale, fatigued men through the crisscross of the bars, he could not know that an Information had arrived, that the Captain had called Woolbine and said, "Well, Mr. Woolbine, if you're getting Lawyer Jordan, send him over."

Suddenly there was a rattling at the grate, the grate between police station and prison. And a man with a paper, possibly a lawyer, was coming down the corridor, saying, "Drew, Joe Drew?"

"Here."

The man faced him. He was of more than average height, dark, stocky, bulky in the shoulders, with a hard, sensible face, hard dark brown eyes. "Are you Joe Drew?"

Joe nodded.

"I'm Ben Jordan, I'm your lawyer." And to the small, crabbed Jerry, who had shuffled after him, Ben Jordan said, "Let him out."

To Joe it seemed fantastic that the man could have such authority. But the door to his cell swung open. "I understand," Jordan said, as they went down the corridor, "you beat up the Squire."

Joe nodded.

Once they were outside, Jordan said, "You'll have to excuse me, I have to go to another station. Your Uncle Charlie asked me to tell you to go to his apartment. Your mother's waiting for you."

Mom!

"Be at my office to-morrow," Jordan said, "Jones Law Building, three o'clock." He indicated his car, "Can I drop you?"

Joe shook his head. The lawyer drove away.

Joe stood there. Mom. Doubtless notified by Uncle Charlie. Mom, with those eyes like inkwells about to spill. And boy, would they spill this time. She would say nothing. But boy, would she be thinking. Why hadn't he come to see her? How could he, how could he go straight from the South Pacific to see some girl? A Polish girl at that. And then get mixed up in a fight?

It was going to be sweet . . . he found himself reaching for a nickel, making for a phone. "Hey, Stell—Joe! Stell, I'm out!"

"Oh, Joe!" He could almost feel her. "Oh, Joe, are you all right?"

"Sure, baby."

"Oh, Joe," she cried, "you did it for me, you beat him up for me!"

"Take it easy, sweetheart," he said. Then he told her. "Listen, baby. Mom's in town. And I got to see her, right away."

"Sure, Joe," she said. But he felt the vibrant impatience of her voice. "I'll be seeing you, baby," he said.

"Soon, Joe, soon." And her kiss clicked to him. Jesus, he said to himself, she's got something for me.

He stepped out of the phone booth. O.K., he said to himself, let's go. He tried to walk without limping. It hurt more, but it was the thing to do.

He didn't want Mom to know.

CHAPTER IV

LAWYER JORDAN

JOE'S UNCLE CHARLIE, the nervous, harried little man of the composing room, to be seen around the newspaper blocks in his paper biretta, was by evening a gentleman and a scholar, albeit living in a large and old-fashioned world. His world was the world of Benjamin Franklin, of the days of the expanding horizons of American life. Benjamin Franklin, to Uncle Charlie,

was the greatest inventor and the greatest man America had had. Uncle Charlie was very charming.

And Mom too was very nice. He had always loved her being beautiful, and now that she was careworn, with her hands somewhat coarsened with farm work, and her great black eyes spilling out of a faintly crinkled face, what with her remade tweed, her tallness, her stiff spine and her dignity, Joe felt an overwhelming love and respect for her. And for something, above all, that made him like his family. It was really his father's invention, and though his father had invented the only good parachute, and the wheels that folded back into a plane, and many other things, one thing Joe thought was one of his greatest inventions. "In this family," his father used to say, "everyone loves and trusts everyone else." It had meant that since he was a little boy, what had been his business was his business. There was another principle in their family: once someone went to his room, his privacy was inviolate. Even when he was a little boy, and had gone to his room, his father or mother, if they wanted to see him, first knocked on his door.

Thank you, folks.

And it counted now. For all the questioning of her eyes, Mom asked him nothing. Though she hated fighting, she seemed to have her own reflections about the Squire, and as for why he had battered him, he hinted at it briefly when Uncle Charlie was out of the room. Mom said, "Well, son, I haven't much, but whatever I have, it's yours."

But that, nice as it was, wasn't what made the evening. The evening was made by the handsome, thoughtful Mr. Woolbine. He wrote in the *Clarion* not only as Ned Woolbine, but once in a while, on special stories, as "The Observer." He was the author of a famous series, "The Kitchen Middens of Pittsburgh," in which he had told what the town was like during the depression. But that wasn't what was remarkable about him. What was remarkable, Joe thought, was how his harried uncle had gone to him with the squib in the paper, said, "Mr. Woolbine, my nephew's in trouble," and the self-respecting, rather important Mr. Woolbine had immediately gone to bat, as if it were his own son.

For which Joe thanked him. And said, "Look, Mr. Woolbine. What kind of a man is this lawyer?"

And Woolbine told him. "He's no ordinary police-station lawyer," he said; "he's quite a man, and quite a personality around town." And he told how Ben Jordan had been an orphan, and been befriended and adopted and given his name by a Jewish family that had kept store in Steelboro, in the shadow of the mills. It was known as Jordan's Family Store. "And indeed," Woolbine said, "it was a family store. The whole family worked there, Bennie too as a kid. The store serviced the family trade." Woolbine told how the millworkers, the great foreign population of Steelboro, the Czechs and Poles and the Hungarians and the Croats, would bring their wives there, right off the train, in their colourful vestments and bare feet. In Jordan's Family Store these vestments were changed for American machine-made "wrappers" and corsets. "A man he came to know as 'Uncle' Berel worked there too," Woolbine said. "He was a remarkable man." But in Jordan's Family Store, "Uncle" Berel was man of all work.

"Now it was in this store," Woolbine said, "that Bennie became a counsellor." And he told how Ben Jordan, way back as a boy in Steelboro, was known as the "boy counsellor." "You see," he said, "there were a lot of ignorant people there, immigrants, who didn't know the law." And he told how a landlord would take advantage of a window broken by a batted ball. And as the Jordans were nice people, and dealt in a fair way with their trade, "Why, all sorts of people came there," Woolbine said, "as much for the goods as for advice. As a matter of fact," he said, "Bennie became the chief attraction of the store."

And most of this he credited to the woman who had mothered Bennie, who sensed that the boy had a flair for the law. Whenever she heard of some trouble she would consult him about it, then retail his wisdom around the blocks.

Then misfortune struck the Jordan family. Mr. Jordan died. And Uncle Berel, sickened by the sudden death of his brother-in-law and this interminable money-grabbing, vowed he would have no more. "He refused to work for money," Woolbine said; "he became quite a character."

And he told how Uncle Berel, the bearded Jew, sick not only of working for money, was sickened of the iniquity of his people and of the world. "He became a sort of street-corner preacher," Woolbine said. "On Jewish holidays you could see him standing outside the synagogues, shaking his fist at the people inside, and

saying God didn't dwell just in synagogues and churches, and people who went there once in a while were fooling themselves, that wouldn't be enough to find favour with God. Anyway," Woolbine said, "he was a sort of religious maniac, if you want to call him that. But a very nice man. I've met him."

Now he told how Uncle Berel's unwillingness to work in business resulted in Mrs. Jordan's having to sell the store, for the store could not be run without him. And she, who had been owner, got a job as saleslady there.

But she had one determination, her children would go to school. And Bennie, being the eldest, tried to help out. "To make a long story short," Woolbine said, "he got a job down-town, near the courthouse, helping a blind man sell newspapers." That, in a manner of speaking, was the beginning of Ben Jordan's career. "Everybody knew Newsboy Bennie, as he was called," Woolbine said. And he told how, in the shadow of the courthouse, lawyers and judges would buy papers from him, and, having heard of the "boy counsellor," would kiddingly ask his opinion.

Then one day a local boxing promoter asked Bennie if he wanted to earn five bucks, and Bennie went on as a preliminary boy. It was Newsboy Bennie *v.* the Millvale Terror, at four rounds. "He fought quite a bit," Woolbine said, "though he was just good enough to hold his own, and help out the family."

Then the woman who had mothered him heard about it and couldn't bear it. "Bennie," she said, "is this what we've struggled for?" And she put him back on the path of being a lawyer.

Then he told about how, when the going got tough, some of the lawyers and judges would chip in for the Newsboy's tuition. And how, when he got out of law school, they started him on his legal career. "In a way he was fathered by the city," Woolbine said. "And the hand of the city is still over him." He told about how, to this day, lawyers and judges gave him hints. And how coloured shoe-shine men, once preliminary boys he had fought, brought him cases.

"I happen to know," Woolbine said, "he doesn't like Stoney Pike. Though he gets along with him on the surface. I guess he has to." And he added something about how Jordan, like many a lawyer, hoped some day to be judge. "But he's never truckled to Stoney," Woolbine said, "for all that Stoney has 16,000 votes."

Gee whiz, 16,000 votes, Joe said to himself.

"Well, now you know why I picked him," Woolbine wound up, referring to Lawyer Jordan. "If he doesn't suit you after you see him, you can get someone else."

Joe and his mother looked at each other. In her language, this was "wait and see pudding."

In Pittsburgh there is a Bridge of Sighs. It is a long arm of masonry, above the street, connecting the courthouse and jail.

As Joe and his mother passed not far from it, on the way to the lawyer's office, he paused to look at it. Its significance was unavoidable. Over the Bridge of Sighs the prisoner stepped from the courthouse to the jail, took his last look at normal life, and started on his way.

Nice going . . . Joe felt the pressure of his mother's hand on his arm, he knew that she was saying: everything will be all right.

They went on, to the Jones Law Building, just a few steps away. And there, on the frosted glass of a door they found the legend: Benjamin Jordan, Attorney & Counsellor at Law. In small letters below were the names of some of the people who worked for him.

The waiting-room, large and crowded, was presided over by a switchboard girl. She was a Slovak girl, Joe thought, young, pretty, and decayed-looking, and barely able to keep from yawning. There was about her the aspect of a girl who had danced and sweated all night, and to whom the damp passion of the night still clung in the afternoon.

Between a stifled yawn and some clicking of the switchboard, she told him Mr. Jordan was not in, he was in court, would they be seated.

As most of the chairs in the crowded waiting-room were taken, Joe and his mother sat across from each other. Next to him were two Negro plasterers, their black hands streaked with white, one plasterer with his head bandaged, as if he had just fallen off the scaffold. There was a Woman with a Past, possibly thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, with eyes slightly glossy, that seemed to look off into her memories. When one of the men in the office or some other passable male came in, she was suddenly her smiling, reserved self, touching down her skirt over the plumpish calves. In a couple of minutes, Joe noticed, she crossed

her legs and again up went the skirts. Why they touched 'em down he didn't know; must be a nervous tic or something.

Near her sat three women, not with memories, but with troubles. They were Irish or German or Bohemian, but with an American surface, American words, American ways. They were roughly of the same age as the Woman with the Past, they might have come from the same block, but they were now an entirely different sort. They were the Tenement Mothers. They had struggled for respectability, and they had made it: each had a ring on her finger. Unlike The Woman, they possibly never had seen the inside of a hotel, or a penthouse apartment, or somebody's summer cottage . . . these things they saw in the movies. But what they saw, every day of their lives, was a husband who grouched, who had to be "kept on the job," and kids "that was gettin' so tough, you didn't know what to do with 'em." These things they knew better than their own faces, for as they said, "You don't have no time for yourself." And their faces revealed it, one fat and chunky and swollen beyond the apparition of the thin, dreamy girl that still faintly showed beneath the layers of fat; another, now thin and shrunken and scrawny, but with something faded and indomitable about her, whose fingers fidgeted at her hollow cheeks that once had been plump. The life and ardour and shape and strength of these women had gone into washing the diapers, blowing the noses of the kids, forcing castor oil down their throats, trying to teach them manners, turning them out in white dresses for Confirmation . . . and now they had troubles. You knew they had troubles because they talked about them, right in the crowded waiting-room, not in shrill tones, but in low tones, just loud enough for everyone to hear. Their troubles concerned Henry, the husband of the tall, pale, shrunken one. This Henry had come home one night "and had the nerve to tell her" that he was in love with another girl.

Now they began to talk about "him," as Henry was called. But when they talked about "him" they were also talking about all men. The stout, swollen woman said she "didn't know what got into 'em." And the middle one, the one not too swollen or shrunken from her former proportions, but with arms out at the elbow, in the position of the eternal package-wrapper, express-handler, pot-wrassler, said about the girl in the case, "I seen her at St. Agatha's."

There was now something about how the girl was only sixteen, and looked so innocent "you wouldn't think butter would melt in her mouth." And the fat one said, "Still water runs deep."

It was plain the case was past all persuasions of family, friends, the priest; they all had talked to "him," but "he wouldn't listen to nobody."

And now they all agreed on one thing, "Make him pay."

There were, besides, some clients, plainly criminal. A Chinese, old, stony, blunted, possibly an opium-smoker. A young Italian with a foolish grin, who had been drinking Saturday night, run his car into a lamp-post. And a man with a flappy face and crying eyes Joe recognized as having been in jail with him.

Joe looked into his mother's eyes. They were as shiny as shoe-buttons at the moment, and telling him something: it doesn't inspire confidence.

And the lawyer came in. He came in with a breeze, as of the city, the courts, his success (he was in brown, Joe noted). His associates surrounded him, all questioning and enthusiastic. "Yep," he said, "got him off." To Joe, with a glance of recognition in the hard, appraising eyes, "Be with you in a minute." He turned to another client, said, "There won't be anything for several days." And so, to each in turn now, he gave a moment of his encouragement, counsel, advice. In these moments, Joe got some quality of the man. Tanned, with dark, steady eyes, a trifle bald on top, bulky-shouldered, intelligent, this was the competent man. This was the man who ran drug-stores, the man who got the particle out of your eye. This was the rug-buyer who could tell you the difference between the four-hundred-dollar rug and the four-thousand. This was the travel agent who knew the better route. This was the captain who got his men in properly, and got them out. This was the competent man.

And now they were going into the lawyer's office, just an ordinary office, a desk, law books, some easy chairs. "Mr. Jordan," Joe said, "this is my mother."

Mr. Jordan nodded, Mom spoke. "Mr. Jordan," she said, "I want my boy defended, and I'll mortgage my farm."

The lawyer looked at her. Tall, pale, with those black eyes spilling, he realized she was quite a customer. And looking into her eyes, "Why do you say that, Ma'am?"

"Oh," she said, "I've had some experience with lawyers."

"Well," he said, "I don't think it'll be necessary."

She nodded, taking him at his word. "Then," she said, "I think I'll go." And explaining to the lawyer, "I think he'd rather see you alone." She went up to her son, and looking into his eyes, her hand pressed his arm. "If you need me," she said, "I'll be up at the farm." And with a nod to the lawyer, she was gone.

The lawyer was surprised. One of his favourite legends was upset. His legends were based on long years of experience in dealing with people in trouble. One of the things he said was, "Women always cry." But this woman didn't cry. It was as if, in her pale face, all the tears she could shed were frozen back in the past.

He looked at her son, tall, dark-eyed, the rather lean, jagged face. The uniform, the medal. He had heard a little of the family from Woolbine. "Well," he said, "tell me all about it."

Joe told him: the night he went away, the night he came back, what happened to Stell, how Mr. Witowski was fired, how he went to the Squire's office. . . .

The lawyer listened. Now and again his appraising eyes looked at the young man. "Tell me," he said, "did you ever do anything like this before?"

Joe shook his head.

The lawyer nodded, but his eyes seemed to say: we'll look into that.

"Well, Mr. Jordan," Joe said, "what do we do?"

The lawyer was thinking about it. Of course, the kid had the uniform; that was the best part of it. But going in there, beating up Stoney, a public official, a man of Stoney's power. If only it had been someone else— The lawyer's hard, ring-wise eyes looked at Joe, he said, "Plead guilty."

Joe felt hollow.

"And," said the lawyer, "I think I can get you time off for good behaviour, maybe a suspended sentence."

Joe felt pushed back. Despite all Captain Delehanty and Woolbine had said, this might not be the man. "Why do you say that?" he said.

The lawyer explained. Outside of Stoney being a powerful man, under the law there was no such thing as justifiable assault and battery, no such thing as justifiable intent to kill.

"I didn't intend to kill him," Joe said.

The lawyer looked at the piece of paper listing the things charged against him. "They charge it," he said. He thought of something, a piece of information that had come to him through one of his many "pipes" through the city. "Did you know," he said, "the Squire has three broken ribs?"

Joe had not known. He could see, this made it more serious. But all the same—"I don't feel guilty," he said. He found himself indicating the outer office, referring to the people out there, "I don't feel like a criminal."

The lawyer nodded, who did?

Joe was getting something. He was not putting it over. There was something he should convey to the lawyer that he was not managing to convey. In fact, instead of his feeling that he was on trial before the lawyer, the lawyer, in a way, should be on trial before him. He got up. He felt nervous, irascible, wanting to say something, not knowing how to say it. The lawyer was looking at him, seeing him go up and down, observing the Marine uniform, the Silver Star. The guy's dark eyes were about to flash at him. "Mr. Jordan," Joe said, "may I speak to you man to man?"

The lawyer nodded.

"Mr. Jordan," Joe said, looking into the lawyer's eyes, "I came here because I heard you were good. And," he said, "I've heard about time off for good behaviour, and suspended sentence, only that doesn't mean anything to me. I don't want anything like that." He was going up and down, trying to get himself into saying what he wanted to say—then out the window he saw it, the Bridge of Sighs. There may as well have been a gibbet there. It was there, he might walk across it, maybe he better find out what this was about . . . and looking into the lawyer's eyes, "How bad is it," he said, "what's the worst they can do to me?"

The lawyer looked at the list of things charged against him. "There's felonious assault and battery," he said. "If you've never done anything like this before, they won't give you the limit."

Joe was thinking of Stoney's power. "But if they do?"

"Seven years."

"Seven years!" Joe looked into the lawyer's hard brown eyes.

"And intent to kill," the lawyer said, "is also seven years. But," he said, "there isn't a chance in the world they'll give it to you. But you see," he said, "you're up against a powerful man. You

know, if he wants to, he picks judges in this town, he has something to say about who goes on the slate."

Joe just looked into the lawyer's eyes. He was beginning to realize what he was up against. He could see that Stoney, with his 16,000 votes, as Woolbine had said, was a very influential man. In fact, the more he saw, the more serious it became. But he also saw something else, something that had been vaguely forming in him ever since he had been in jail. Either you take stuff like this, and regret it all your life, or you fight.

"Mr. Jordan, I know I'm up against a tough man. And," he said, "I want defence. I don't want you to think I'm a nut," he said, "I don't want to take a walk out there," and he indicated the Bridge of Sighs.

"But," he said, "I'm going to get that Squire. And I got an idea." And his eye holding the lawyer's eye, he told him. "Here's the idea," he said. "You go in there and defend me. That is, it looks like defence. But in the middle of the case, you go after the Squire. You bring out the kind of a man he is."

That was Joe's idea, that was the idea that had been building up in him, the thing he stood for now, that he felt he would stand for till hell freezes over—and looking the lawyer in the eye, "Now that's the lawyer I want, Mr. Jordan," he said, "I want a man to do just that."

Ben Jordan looked at him. It was interesting. The fellow, he thought, was a sort of high-class fellow. He had something beyond the thought of saving his own skin. The question was, was it revenge, or was it—but taking it easy, and just looking into the kid's dark, flaring eyes (strange, he thought, he had the impulse to call him the kid)—"Tell me," he said, "why isn't it enough just to get out of it, if I could get you off?"

Joe nodded. He understood perfectly, and it was a good question. "I'll tell you why, Mr. Jordan," he said, "because I didn't fight for that kind of stuff. I've been through too much."

He wanted to say more, but he couldn't. The window in his mind opened. He saw the Island, the dark forms running against the fire, dropping . . . Ron, with his beautiful face in the mud, and the brains of the poet splashed all over his face—"Jesus Christ," he said, "we didn't fight for that kind of stuff." The malaria gremlin was racing around, that red haze was coming over him, the red haze of the night the Jap fleet kept pumping

it in, the night he found himself crying, and couldn't stop. "God-dam it," he said, thinking of Stoney, "I'm going to show that sonofabitch. I'm going to take him down, I'm going to see if this kind of stuff can go on."

Justice, Ben Jordan thought to himself, seeing the dark, jagged face, the determined rage, the guy wanted justice. He saw him trying to control himself, turning his face away, going up and down, limping a little. The guy had it now, control, and turning to him, "Now, Mr. Jordan," he said, "I've told you what I want, and with all due respect, there's only one thing I want to know, are you the man?"

They looked at each other. And now Joe felt he was getting at something in the guy, the brown eyes were no longer merely hard, appraising, they were thoughtful.

"If you're the man, Mr. Jordan, just tell me. And if not, all I ask is that you say so. No hard feelings, and I'll pay you what I owe."

Ben Jordan thought: He was a little insistent on paying. One of these honest fellows. And the mother, mortgage the farm. As if it all could be done with dough. But that wasn't the point. The fellow had asked quite a question: Are you the man? Are you the man to go in there and fight for—and looking into the young man's dark, intent eyes, "You want justice," he said.

"I got it comin' to me," Joe said.

"You want to feel you fought for something," the lawyer said. The kid nodded.

The lawyer understood. Once, long ago, in World War I, he had fought for something himself. Or thought he had. But there was more to it than that. "Is it worth it to you," he said, "to take the rap?"

He saw the young man's eyes fill with anger, bitterness, a murderous resentment, pride. "I'm not going to take the rap."

"You don't know," the lawyer said. "Suppose we fight, and you still take it?"

"If we fight," Joe said, "if we go in there and give 'em all we got"—he didn't know how to say it, but somehow his spirit said it, his spirit filling with thoughts of his father hounded by Stoney, with thoughts of Stell, Stell and the baby. He found himself nodding to himself, yes, it was worth it.

The lawyer was looking at him. He respected him. He respected

him, not only for the Marine uniform, but for his hard, clean, youthful burn. Still, all that wouldn't necessarily win the case. And Stoney was a mean, shrewd, powerful customer. As much as he himself didn't like Stoney, he had to hand it to him. Stoney was a smart guy, and it would take some doing to make a dent in him. And as for what might happen to the kid—he looked him in the eye, "Don't say I didn't warn you," he said.

Joe smiled, "Then you'll take the case?"

"Not so fast," Bennie said. "Now listen, kid," he said, fixing him with a friendly but serious eye. "You sure the Squire did that to that girl?"

Joe just looked at him, annoyed, resentful, but he understood, that would be important to the lawyer, to the case. He nodded.

"Could I see her?" the lawyer said.

Joe was annoyed, repelled. He realized what the lawyer had in mind. The lawyer wanted to make up his own mind as to whether she was telling the truth. Perhaps he should be thankful that the lawyer took it this seriously. Only he didn't know, he didn't know whether Stell would come here or not. "I guess so," he said.

The lawyer was looking at him. "Tell me," he said, "the mill that her father was fired from, was that Three Mile Mill?"

Joe felt as if he got one straight to the button. He saw the lawyer's eye lit by some special knowledge, information. "How do you know?"

"Oh," said the lawyer, "in this business you get to know a lot of things."

A feeling was forming in Joe, a feeling that maybe this was the man. "Well, Mr. Jordan, how about it?"

"I'll tell you," Lawyer Jordan said, "you send that girl in here, and then I'll let you know." He gave him the hard, business-like eye. "Have you any money?"

Joe thought. He remembered the early days on Guadal, how the only thing you could do with your money was throw it into Tenaru Bay, to see if you could hit fish. But when the inventing idea struck him, he had started to save. He tapped his money belt, he had a thousand bucks in there.

Soldier's pay, Jordan thought. A case like this, if he took it, might take up a lot of time. But—"I'll tell you," he said. "You give me fifty dollars as a retainer. If I don't take the case, I'll give it back to you." And he told him that the actual handing

over of the money would be done with Miss Annie Aiggers, in one of the offices outside.

And now they shook hands, the lawyer with a trifle of a smile. And Joe, looking into those eyes, neither hard nor appraising now, but with something smiling and friendly, as of the ring-master after the bout, hoped he was the man.

Are you the man? rang through the lawyer's mind after the boy had gone, are you the man?

He sat alone. In his office. There were people waiting for him, things he could do. But he sat alone, telling the telephone girl not to ring him. He was being rung from a higher Central: Are you the man?

He didn't know. He had been the man for many things. But this, to take the Marine's money, to encourage him into a finish fight with Stoney. He thought of Stoney, Stoney's 16,000 votes, his power, his long history through the city (some of it good, way back in the old days), his powerful connections, Three Mile Mill, Mr. Osmond.

Oh boy!

And justice, that's what the boy was after, justice.

Lawyer Jordan thought of something he had said many times, said it to Woolbine, his associates, judges, men about town:

"I've practised law for over twenty years," he would say, "and I've never seen justice done."

Worse than that, he thought, he had met so few people who wanted it. Sometimes a woman deserted by her husband, sometimes a criminal wrongly accused, sometimes a person struck by a street-car. But mostly they didn't want justice. They wanted some money out of it, or a shorter sentence, or, as the criminals put it, "To cop a plea."

Good God, the deals he had made. The times he had said, "Your Honour, in order to save the state time and money . . ." Who cared about saving the state time and money? It was a racket, a conspiracy, as he sometimes saw it, in which judges, prosecutors, and lawyers alike engaged, all of them making money out of the mills of the law.

And this fellah, the sucker, wanted justice.

Bennie Jordan felt himself impelled almost against his will. He

thought of his "Uncle," shaking his fist at the synagogues, saying that the Just did not necessarily dwell in synagogues and churches . . . and, he might have added, in courts.

Justice.

He thought of something else. He thought of Stoney. And his trick of having men fired from Three Mile Mill so he could get their women. He couldn't prove it, exactly. It would be hard to prove.

But years ago a man had come in here, a Polish man or a Bohemian, his eyes wild, all worked up, screaming, "I keel, I keel." He had been fired from the mill. And upon being reinstated, found out that Stoney had prevailed upon his wife. "I keel," he screamed, "I keel."

"Now look," he had said to the man, "you're not going to kill anybody. You go home and behave yourself." He found it, at the time, the only thing to do. But this was different, this was a Marine, the Marine had already beaten up Stoney.

He thought of something else. The Marine saying, "I got to believe in something," or words to that effect. He wanted to believe in . . . decency, the United States, something like that.

Could you hold that against him?

He thought of something else. Stoney had become a Jew-hater in recent years. A wave of poison had rolled over the world, and Stoney had been infected. He went around spreading stories, spread them right in his court. In the early days of the war he had said, "These here Jews, they made the war, but they ain't goin' to fight it." Then after there were Jewish heroes and Jewish dead, he turned his attention to blood doning. "These here Jews," he said, "they're givin' their blood to make the whole country Jewish." He had another one, which he peddled in his court, "The first war was to make the world safe for democracy, this war is to make the world safe for the Jews."

He had called him up about it, saying, "Squire, do I hear you said . . .?" and the Squire had answered, "Well, that's what they say, Ben, that's what they say." He was a great practitioner, Stoney was, of "they say."

Bennie thought now of the Marine and his girl. Suddenly he didn't want to see the girl; it hardly mattered. He knew, in essence, the Marine's story was true. Of course he would see her, he had to, but the crux of the matter was what the kid had

said, "Why should a man like that be allowed to get away with this stuff?" or words to that effect.

Yes, he had been a lawyer for over twenty years, and never seen justice done. But why not try it? Why not throw his weight in on the scales? Maybe there was going to be some kind of brave new world, maybe there was some hope after all.

He felt something now. Possibly the boy had learned something from him, he didn't know. But he had learned something from the boy. Something you couldn't exactly put in words. Something that had to do with having faith, faith in America, in a better world, in something being on the square.

O.K. Maybe it was going to be *Newsboy Bennie v. . . .* He thought of something. He knew a lot about this town. Its criminals, its punks and whores. Its judges and people that sit in high places. The break the newspapers give you for a sensation. What a bore it is, sometimes, to be in the right.

To put this over he needed the right man, the right judge. Even for justice, he thought grimly, you had to put in the fix. Not that he was a fixer; he had never tampered with juries. But his great acquaintanceship in this town, the fights he had fought and the fighters he knew, his many successful murder cases, even his having been the "boy counsellor" of the Steelboro store, it all constituted some kind of reputation, legend, fix.

He thought of the judges of Pittsburgh, those who knew the law and those who didn't. He thought of the sympathies of Marshall, Musmanno. He thought of Ralph Smith, a wonderful man, who had died. He thought of the judge who was working on a book of philosophy, the judge who was a drinker, the judge who was a fool. He thought of the Jewish judges . . . a reverie of judges, courts, cases came over him, a reverie of the city, old legends of the courts.

Then he washed it all away. He knew, inside of himself, what he was doing. He was trying to avoid the unavoidable. For by all considerations of humanity, fairness, and his own personal touch with him, there was one judge above all judges that he would like to have try the case.

This was Judge Farjeon, Waldo Farjeon, who had been a sick man most of his life. He was a tall man, with dark hair, a dark, grim poetic face, and blue, watery eyes that seemed to seep his

pain. He had been injured in an accident many years ago, a spinal injury, and his spine never really had healed. "I've got something at my back, reminding me," he used to say. He meant reminding him of the miseries, the troubles, the accidents and injuries of humanity.

For that's what Waldo Farjeon was interested in, humanity. And often he had come to feel that man was crushed in the vice of the law. Before him stood the criminal, the shoplifter, the fool, the whore. But what had made these people what they were? Were not their sins, to a certain extent, the sins of society? And what was meant by "correction"? Had he not seen, any number of times, the criminal sent away, supposedly for "correction," only to come out a worse criminal?

No, he thought, only one thing had ever been said about it that really counted in a great big way. The words of the Master who said, "Go and sin no more."

Sometimes he felt he had lost all respect for the courts, for the law.

Yet he was a judge. If he didn't believe in it, why didn't he resign? Many times he had thought of resigning. But here on the bench he could do some good. Here he could temper justice with mercy. "If I let you go," he would say, looking down into the eyes of the shoplifter, the cheque-raiser, the whore, "will you try and lead a better life?"

The other judges didn't like it. They handed out six months, he handed out a lecture. Of course, every now and then, when there was nothing else to do, he pronounced sentence. But he did it with misgivings. He knew the defence lawyers, many of them, did not like him. They liked to try cases before him, but they looked upon him as a "sucker," an easy mark, an eccentric. Nevertheless, Judge Farjeon had a following amongst the people. Not perhaps because of his philosophy, but they said, "He's a good fellow, he lets you off." And the Farjeon name was a great name in Pittsburgh. Judge Farjeon ran as an Independent, was elected with little trouble.

His manner in court was mild, informal, unassuming. He refused to wear the black robe. "A robe does not make a judge," he would say. He also insisted that the tipstiffs, as the court attendants were called, be simple and unofficious, that the court crier do as little crying as possible, that there be an end to

officiousness and humbug, all of which was taken as a rebuke by some of the judges.

And these judges sought reprisals. Judge Farjeon had been told that criminal cases would not be assigned to him unless he passed out a certain amount of punishments. And in this respect, he kept up a "low batting average," as he said. But the chief reprisal was to assign a tipstaff to his court that he didn't like.

The tipstaff of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania is the bailiff of elsewhere. The word comes from England, where the court attendant tipped the staff as the magistrate went by. The usual tipstaff in the Pittsburgh courts was a political onhanger, a friend or indigent relative of the judge, at least a man friendly and helpful to him. But this was not so in Judge Farjeon's court.

The tipstaff in Judge Farjeon's court, Titus Jones, was one of those figures to be found around the courts, a man who really knew something of the law, but through a series of personal misfortunes had not become the lawyer or judge he felt he should be. He was by now an old man, with white hair, a very American face, and a scholarly smile. He had been a canal-boat man in his youth, and was very hale and hearty. His eyes, however, pale and blue, held at times a malignant glitter, a punishment lust. Possibly this had come about in a life cheated of the authority, dignity, position, he felt should be his. At any rate, Titus was used in a strange way by some of the president judges.

Should a man be elected to the bench who did not know the law, which happened now and again, Titus Jones would be assigned to that court. And Titus, seeing the judge indecisive, would go up to him, and in a low tone say, "Give him six months." However, as Judge Farjeon did know the law, Titus Jones (sometimes called "Admiration" because of his preference for Admiration cigars) was put into Farjeon's court to spy upon him, to report back to the judges that not enough punishments were passed out.

Despite the irritation of Titus's presence, Judge Farjeon endured him because he wanted no trouble with the other judges. Farjeon had come to realize that "we all pay off for something." Titus Jones was his manner of paying off for his predilection for mercy, humanity, for his dedication to the Master. Such was the man, the judge, Bennie was thinking about, the man he felt must try this case.

He picked up his hat and went over to the courthouse.

He could see by those streaming out, the "regulars," that most people had gone for the day. "Admiration" Jones was still around the court. "Judge in?" Bennie asked.

"In chambers," the old tipstaff said.

Bennie nodded, went through the door of the court, into the little alcove leading to the judge's chambers. The door was open, the judge at work. Bennie stood at the door—"Can I see you a moment, Judge?"

The judge looked up, nodded.

"Judge," Bennie said, "I come to see you about something unusual, something that doesn't happen every day. Judge," he said, taking the seat Farjeon indicated to him, "I've practised law for over twenty years, and I've never seen justice done."

The judge's watery blue eyes rested upon him, he nodded.

"Judge," said Bennie, "a young man walked into my office." And he began to tell about the Marine, the girl, something of the Marine's family. "So he has her in the park. Then he goes away."

Judge Farjeon nodded.

"Now, Judge," he said, "here's where we come to something different. There's a man in this town, a Squire, a powerful man—Squire Pike."

Judge Farjeon's eyes, out of his face of pain, were unrevealing.

"Now, Judge," said Bennie, "the boy goes to the Pacific. And the Squire goes after the fellah's girl." And he told the rest of the story in simple prosaic terms.

Farjeon listened. "You think the Squire did it?" he said. He meant the rape.

Bennie saw the boy's dark, burning eyes—"He did something," he said.

The judge looked at him. "Admiration" Jones shuffled in with some papers. "I thought you'd like to see these," he said, putting them down before the judge. Judge Farjeon seemed surprised at this courtesy. Bennie, knowing all about the judge and "Admiration," wondered for a moment whether the old tipstaff had been listening.

"Of course, I'm just consulting you, Judge," he said. He wished he had brought a third party. Jones was ambling out. "Proceed," Judge Farjeon said.

"Well, that's all there is to it," Bennie said. "Except that I'd

like to get my man a fair trial." His eyes fixed on Farjeon. "You wouldn't try this case yourself, Judge?"

The judge seemed somewhat fretful. His watery blue eyes raised to Bennie's. "You know, Mr. Jordan," he said, "in the strictest sense, you should have come to me with somebody from the District Attorney's office."

Bennie nodded. "It's late, Judge," he said. "And I was full of it. I thought, knowing you as I do"—he had tried hundreds of cases before him.

The judge nodded. "You say," he said, "the boy's been to Guadalcanal?"

Bennie nodded. "He has the Silver Star."

Judge Farjeon thought. A boy with a decent background. Guadalcanal. The Silver Star. A girl. Stoney Pike. Now Stoney, with all his power, was the accuser. Hm.

Yes, he could probably get to try this case. The judges had plenty on him. But he also had something on them, instances of judicial prejudice, deals. "You sure," he said, "the boy's all right?"

"If he isn't," said Bennie, "if anything turns up, I'll let you know."

The judge nodded. "And all you want?" he said.

"Justice," Bennie said; "a fair trial."

Judge Farjeon nodded. They began speaking in low tones. And now, in the last moments of twilight, as the shadows invaded the courthouse, a lawyer and a judge made a conspiracy . . . justice was going to come to Pittsburgh. They were talking about how Judge Farjeon could get hold of the case.

While the judge and the lawyer were talking, Joe was walking up and down in front of a tenement in Mill District. He was waiting for Stella to come from work. He could have waited upstairs; in fact, he had been upstairs. But he had seen something in her mother's eyes that told him he was hardly welcome, that she would never be satisfied till they were married. He decided to wait downstairs.

As he paced back and forth, he noted the crude, misshapen people coming from work, the kids playing games, the delinquent girls, still with an aspect of quietude and church-going about their delinquency. Two other things he noted, the stars in the windows, in almost every window in Mill District there was a star,

sometimes two stars, three stars. And in so many windows there were flower pots, the Polish and Bohemian and Hungarian people loved flowers. It was strange and touching to him that here, right under the smoke of the mills, the vines and geraniums bloomed . . . and here was Stell, coming along in her work clothes, pants, a lunch-pail, a welder's cap and goggles perched on her beautiful head.

"Stella the Weldah," he said, smiling at her.

"Stella the Weldah," she said, smiling back.

"Hello, baby," he said, and he kissed her. He kissed her again, he found himself with his hands on her arms, kissing her, tenderly brushing her lips . . . he could see her eyes begin to drift, as if drifting toward the yearning, the sensuous expectancy she had with him. Then, "Joe," said she, shaking herself with a little smiling shake, "we're on the street."

He nodded. They were indeed on the street. And it reminded him of something. There was something he wanted to give her. "Stell," he said, taking an envelope out of his pocket, an envelope with some money in it, "it's only ten bucks. But I want to give it to you, every week."

Her eyes, blue and big, looked at him with gratitude, wonderment, uncertainty. "Gee, Joe," she said, "it's nice of you, but I can take care of him."

"I know you can take care of him," he said, "but I want to do it. Look, Stell," he said, crushing the envelope into her hand, "be a good kid, take it."

And, as if forcing herself a little, and obliging him, she got herself to let it stay in her hand. But all that was past with her, her eyes flooded with some particular sweetness, adoration, that he knew was not for him. "Joe," said she, "come on up and see the baby."

He wanted to, he was willing to, but—"They don't care much about me up there," he said, indicating up.

"Oh, well," she said, smiling, "we can't help that."

He looked into her eyes. Unfortunately, he thought, they could help it. "Look, Stell, we can help it," he said. "We could be——" married, was the word. But it halted him. It halted him because something else halted him. Fourteen years, seven on one count, seven on the other. He couldn't think of marriage with anything like that hanging over him. And he couldn't tell her, exactly.

"You see, Stell," he said, "I can't do anything about you and me till after the trial."

"The trial?" Of course she had vaguely realized there would be a trial. But she had never come plunk up against it, like this.

He nodded. And looking into her eyes, "Stell, will you stick by me? The lawyer wants to see you, and——"

Her eyes got frosty, a little angry. Her lips parted. Something in her blue eyes was firing at him: was he a fool, did he have to stand there asking, did he think he had to explain? He had sense enough, for once, to keep still. And then, the frost melting out of her eyes, she forgave him.

And sweeping the whole thing aside, taking it as a matter of course, now smiling about something else, "Come on, Joe," she said, taking his arm, "let's go up and see the baby."

They went up the stairs, their arms about each other. But at each step her mind was being machine-gunned: he was going to be on trial, on trial.

CHAPTER V

THE TRIAL

THE TRIAL OPENED in Judge Farjeon's court.

Joe, who had come to know Bennie quite well, dropping into his office almost every day, and visiting him at his home, was amused by his stage-management. "You get the uniform pressed," Bennie said. "And," he added, "shine the medal up."

The uniform was pressed, Joe looked spick and span.

Bennie wore his usual brown suit this morning. Like an old campaigner he was smiling, self-possessed and cool, touching the familiar props (almost, Joe thought, like testing the ropes) . . . now he was exchanging a few words with the court attendants.

And Stoney Pike came in. He came in, Joe noticed, with considerable dignity. He wore a suit of dark grey, and none of your unpressed frayed garments for this occasion, this was a trial. He was freshly shaven too, held himself well, albeit he couldn't help the stoop of his broad shoulders. He had a grey, dignified, open-faced look. He wore a stiff collar, a dull, expensive, heavy grey

brocade tie with a pearl in it. He looked altogether like an old-fashioned Squire, a man of eminent respectability. His eyes, cleared of their usual rheum and reddishness, met Joe's for a moment, spread a grey, contemptuous mist. His long, bony nose sniffed the court as if not certain he would find justice, satisfaction there.

He was surrounded by his court, Wladek Murowski and Tommy Nowak, Ward Chairman Schikerle, Eddie Pstalski and Eddie Pstalski's mother, who happened to be present at the assault. There were a number of others accompanying him, these being the more respectable of his political onhangers. And should they be necessary, the punks Oddie Simmons and Rudi Plaki. There was also a Latvian translator who had been in court at the time—altogether quite a gathering of the citizenry, with the aspect that he represented them and they represented him. All of them, Joe found, staring at him, as if they were decent, orderly neighbourhood people upon whom a wild man, a tiger, had descended.

The only one missing, Joe thought, was Stell. But she would appear. He had asked his mother not to come, a matter of what the fellahs in his outfit called "strain." And, remembering an outburst to the court on the part of Uncle Charlie when his father was having court troubles, he had asked Uncle Charlie to stay away; he would send for him if he needed him.

He was, for the time being, quite satisfied to go it alone, stripped for action, as it were, with Bennie at the helm.

Bennie was talking with Stoney. Joe could see it was the conversation of men who knew the same world, the same ropes. And, he thought, it was a miracle of affability. "You remember, Ben." . . . "Well, you see, Stone." They were joined now by a tall, over-size, heavy-set man with greying hair, brown-green eyes and glasses. And this, Bennie informed him, walking toward him and speaking in low tones, was Lordy O'Leary of the District Attorney's office, the finest prosecutor in Pittsburgh, the man who would try the case.

Lordy O'Leary was coming over now. "Lordy," Bennie said, "I want you to meet Joe Drew, nice fellah." Lordy's dull eyes looked at him through the glasses, taking in the Silver Star and the campaign bar, and smiling. "How are you?" he said.

And Judge Farjeon came in. Joe's reaction was instantaneous

and pleasant. Bennie had given him some idea of the kind of man Farjeon was. Joe found himself a little amused at how Judge Farjeon quickly slipped up on the bench before the court crier could cry very much. Now the judge was looking at the few papers before him, nodding briefly to Lordy and Bennie, and indicating that the old tipstaff could go ahead with something.

The tipstaff brought in the prospective jurors. There were more women than men.

Ned Woolbine came in. It's funny, Joe thought, how kind strangers can be. After all, what was he to Woolbine? Woolbine had worked with his Uncle Charlie, he had reported his father's case, but was that enough? Yet here he was, serious-eyed and smiling, making a show of shaking hands with him. "Spill the beans, kid," he said, "give 'em hell."

"You going to sit with us, Ned?" Bennie said.

Woolbine shook his head. "I can't, Ben. I'll be back."

The trial had commenced.

Lordy O'Leary was examining the prospective members of the jury in a seemingly indolent way. "Now, Mrs. Bushkill," Lordy said, "the accused in this case" (pointing to him) "is a soldier, a Marine. He came into a public place and attacked one of our public officials. You know that's against the law, don't you?"

Mrs. Charlotte Bushkill, who had a pleasant enough face, rather sensible eyes, thick glasses, and an aspect of physical heartiness, nodded, "Yes, sir."

"Now we're all here to do our duty," the District Attorney said. "What I want to know is, you believe a soldier should observe the law, don't you, Mrs. Bushkill?"

Mrs. Bushkill nodded, yes, a soldier should observe the law.

"Therefore, Mrs. Bushkill," said Lordy, "if you found, if you were convinced, based on the evidence we are about to present—if you found a soldier did break the law, you believe the law should take its course, don't you?"

Mrs. Bushkill, who had no desire to punish anybody, yet had a rigorous and moralistic air about her, now nodded, yes, she believed the law should take its course.

Lordy asked her a few more questions, then Bennie asked her some questions. "Now, Mrs. Bushkill," Bennie said, his smooth competent face pleasant enough, "if you thought, by the evidence we will present, that the soldier, the Marine, was not guilty . . .

you certainly wouldn't hold it against him that he was a soldier, would you?"

She shook her head. "No, sir."

"As a matter of fact," Bennie said, "the District Attorney and myself both want the same thing—a fair trial." He looked at Lordy O'Leary.

O'Leary nodded.

Joe saw Bennie pointing to him, and speaking to Mrs. Bushkill. "That's the defendant, Mrs. Bushkill. Have you ever seen him before?"

Mrs. Bushkill, grey eyes under the glasses, stared at him. "No, sir."

Bennie nodded, this particular juror was all right with him. He did not wish to be picky, particularly as he might have to throw himself on the mercy of the jury. Let Lordy O'Leary be picky. Besides, Lordy might rub 'em the wrong way with that stuff about "Do you believe a soldier should obey the law?" At this point in the game he had the easier side of it, saying, "You have nothing against a man because he's a soldier, have you?" Still, he didn't think he could make too much of this, Lordy was a smart guy, and if he lost any ground by this, in the long run he would make it up.

Joe was surprised by the apathy surrounding the court, the early morning feeling, and his own feeling that neither Lordy O'Leary nor Bennie was trying too hard.

And so the jury was chosen . . . ten women, and two men, a Fuller Brush man, and an Armenian who owned a rug-store. The women, Joe felt, were the compelling personalities of the jury, one vigorous old lady of about sixty, the youngest being about twenty-nine, and the wife of a soldier.

The jury was sworn, Mrs. Bushkill being forelady. And now Lordy O'Leary, waking up a little, was making his initial address. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "the defendant in this case" (pointing to him) "is charged with felonious assault and battery with intent to kill. This is a felony and a serious charge. Now this man" (indicating him) "has been indicted by the Grand Jury of Allegheny County. The Commonwealth will show that the defendant" (pointing) "entered the store, the court as it were, of the Squire, J. Stoneham Pike." This with a deferential wave of the hand to the Squire, who sat stiffly, primly now. "This gentleman," Lordy continued, "as some of you may know, is the Squire

of one of our most important districts, Mill District. His business, ladies and gentlemen, is that of committing magistrate. The foundations of law and justice," he said, "as they work out from day to day, are based on the work of this man."

The hell they are, thought Joe. . . . Lordy went on:

"As we will prove, ladies and gentlemen, on the 3rd of September the Squire was conducting his office in Mill District. The Squire's office is much like a court, not unlike this court, in fact, though the duties are somewhat different. Well, on the said 3rd of September, the defendant, Joe Drew, the Marine" (pointing to Joe) "this defendant walked in, and began to beat up Mr. Pike.

"I say beat up, ladies and gentlemen, because that is the common way of referring to it, everybody will understand. In the course of things, he is beating Mr. Pike with a heavy stick, a pool cue, to which these witnesses will testify"—with a wave of the hand toward Wladek Murowski, Tommy Nowak, and the others. "In the course of which he says, 'I'll kill you, I'll tear you in half!'" Here Lordy seemed to restrain himself. "There followed, ladies and gentlemen, language which we cannot use.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "these acts include various and grave offences. When a man is brandishing a deadly weapon, and beating another man with it, and keeps on saying, 'I'll kill you'—this shows intent."

Bennie thought to object, but he held it. Lordy looked at the jury in his serious way. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, the facts are simple. I don't wish to take much of your time. If the facts are as I state them, there is but one thing you can do." And with that Lordy settled his remarks to the jury. He left the impression of considerable restraint. And turning to the court he said:

"Call Officer Stratton."

Officer Stratton went to the stand with the air of a man who knew his way around courts. He was a fairly handsome figure of a policeman, blondish, with a smaller waist than chest, and something fair enough about him. Joe remembered him with no particular animus—in fact, with some gratitude and respect.

Officer Stratton was sworn, "to the Last Great Day." He now identified himself, Lordy O'Leary questioning him: "Where were you about eleven in the morning on . . ."

Officer Stratton was in a radio car, he gave the approximate corner.

"Just tell the court what happened," Lordy said.

Officer Stratton told how he was sent for, the appearance of the Squire's court and the room back of it, how when he appeared the Marine had been subdued. Squire Pike, though his face and head were bandaged, was plainly a badly beaten man.

"You wouldn't know the nature of his wounds?" Lordy said.

Officer Stratton wouldn't, he had arrived after the Squire had been bandaged, bandages all over his face and head. He told, too, that the Marine had been hurt and his coat torn. Constable Murowski's coat also had been torn.

On the whole Officer Stratton made a good impression, he seemed to have acted like a fair, decent, sensible policeman.

Lordy turned to Bennie—"Take the witness," he said.

Bennie smiled at Stratton, he looked at him with friendly admiration, and, turning to the judge, said, "If Your Honour please, I've known Officer Stratton a long time, consider him a good officer, and a real credit to the Force. No questions," he said, completely accepting the statement of Officer Stratton.

For Chrissake, Joe said to himself, isn't he going to do something? He had come to have a lot of confidence in Bennie, but—then he saw, there was nothing to argue about.

The next witness was the constable, Wladek, or "Greeny," Murowski, so called because of the colour of his eyes. He had a big, hard face. He looked at Joe with a sort of contempt, and keeping his pale green eyes on him—"In he comes," he said, with a flip of his hand at the accused.

"You were there?" Lordy said.

Greeny nodded, he was there.

"Why?" said Lordy.

"I had business there. In he comes," Greeny said, indicating the door back of the court, as if it were the Squire's court.

"You saw him?" Lordy said.

Greeny nodded. Then he explained how he had to go back and forth from the Squire's court to his own desk up front and had missed "the start of it. The first I know," he said, "is when I hear——"

"What did you hear?" Lordy said.

"Cries for help," Greeny said. "And him screamin'." He pointed to Oddie Simmons.

"And then?" Lordy said.

"Well, naturally, I hear cries for help, and I bein' a constable, naturally I goes in there." And as Greeny said this, he gave a little hitch to his belt.

"What did you see?" Lordy said.

"Well, it's hard to tell it," Greeny said.

"Just tell it your own way," Lordy said.

"Well," Greeny said, "he has the Squire cornered, by his desk." He pointed from the Marine to the judge's desk. "And he's beatin' the Squire."

"How?" Lordy said.

"Well, he has his head out like this," Greeny said, extending his arms up toward the judge's bench, shaking his hands, as if holding the Squire, and beating the Squire's head against the bench."

"Your Honour, I think we get the idea," Bennie said.

But His Honour, feeling that if one side wanted to get its story in, the other side had a right to get its story in too, merely gave a touch of his watery blue eyes to Greeny. "Proceed," he said.

Greeny, reaching up to the judge's bench, showed how Joe held the Squire's head down with one hand and kept punching him with the other.

"You saw this?" Lordy said.

"With my own eyes," Greeny said.

"Then what?" Lordy said.

Now Greeny described some of the fight. "Suddenly he gets hold of this inkwell," Greeny said, and as if balancing it in his hand, showing how it was done, "and he gives it to him right in the face."

"You mean this?" Lordy said, and from a table in front of the judge's bench, Lordy picked up the large, cracked, murderous-looking glass and metal inkwell. Joe had been looking at it off and on. Besides the inkwell, there was a pool cue and a number of other "exhibits." Lordy was holding the inkwell in his open palm, showing what it would be like to push it in someone's face.

"You saw that?" Lordy said.

Constable Murowski nodded. "I saw him give it to him, ink and all, right in the face."

Lordy now held the centre of the stage, inkwell in his hand. He tilted it a little, looking at the places where it was cracked, the sun filtering through it, Lordy's hand almost weighing it now, and

indeed you could see that it must weigh three or four pounds. Bennie thought to say something to the judge about the District Attorney making too much of the inkwell, but he let it go.

And now, Lordy, looking at the inkwell like a fat Hamlet, with the aspect of: poor Yorick, I knew him well. . . . "Your Honour, ask that this be marked Exhibit A."

It was so marked.

Now Lordy turned to Greeny. "As he hit him, did he say anything?"

Greeny nodded, and with a show of hard lardy reticence, "Dirty words," he said.

Joe looked at the jury, they were like people on a stage, seated as they were on a small platform, in the shadows. They were plainly taken by the story. Mrs. Bushkill's agreeable, forty-fiveish face had a frozen quality, her compressed lips told what she felt about this kind of thing, beating Squires, dirty words, hitting people with inkwells.

And now Lordy, having put Greeny through some of the details of the fight—"Would you say he was a good fighter?" he said, indicating the Marine.

"Yes, sir," Greeny said, his baleful eye turning on the Marine, "he was good." Which from Greeny, plainly a tough guy, was something of a compliment, but also damaging. "He knew rough-and-tumble like," Greeny said. "I guess they was trained."

"Just tell us what you saw," Lordy cautioned, not wanting any objection in the midst of this fine testimony. And now he turned to Bennie, and with the aspect of both telling him what to do, and giving him every chance to hang himself, "Cross-examine," he said.

Bennie knew it was absolutely foolish to cross-examine Greeny; he knew him well, he was a sturdy guy who would stick to his guns. Besides, every word Greeny had said was true. Bennie looked at Greeny, his own face dark, serious. And looking Greeny in the eye, "No questions," said he.

There was almost an audible sigh of relief and triumph in court, coming from the Squire's followers, who now looked at each other and nodded in a relieved and congratulatory way.

The constable's deputy, Tommy Nowak, took the stand.

Tommy Nowak was a Bohemian, a man of fine features and enormous girth. With his enormousness, there was a largeness of

eye, black, in great distended whites. Joe remembered the eye, for it had glittered like cut-glass as Nowak rushed into the fray. But despite his enormousness, or possibly because of it, there was a look about Tommy Nowak of suffering. He could hardly walk, his legs splayed out from enormous haunches, so that his feet as he walked were nearly a yard apart, little pins, funnelling up to great haunches: He suffered from eating too much, from drinking too much, from dameing too much, he could hardly live, he could hardly breathe, yet this suffering was his life. He was the man, Joe remembered, who had proposed giving him "the boot."

Joe knew something about him, based on things Bennie had told him. He was not, like Constable Murowski, elected by the people. But rather, being constable's deputy, was chosen by the constable. Nevertheless, his appointment had to be confirmed by a court. The appointment, long confirmed, Tommy Nowak had been for years, not merely constable's deputy, but racket collector of Stoney's rackets.

Like Greeny, he had some acquaintanceship with the law, and having been carefully rehearsed, gave crunchy, pertinent testimony. He told how the Marine had butted him, and "knocked the breaif outa me." But his real purpose, Joe could see, had to do with the pool cue. "He grabs this pool cue," Tommy Nowak said, "and he's beatin' the Squire with it."

"Where?" Lordy said.

"On the head." And Nowak, as if holding the pool cue, showed how Joe beat the Squire over the head.

Lordy took a pool cue, dried blood at the thick end, he handled it gingerly as if indicating he did not want to smear his hands with the Squire's blood—and now holding the pool cue toward Nowak, "Could this be the pool cue?" he said.

Nowak said it was, and Lordy asked that the pool cue be marked Exhibit B.

Then he turned to Bennie. "Your witness," said he.

Bennie was thinking about something. One night, sitting around the kitchen with the kid, he had said, "Look, kid, if they hit you first we could put in something about self-defence." But Joe merely looked at him, gave a little shake to his head. He wanted it just as it was. Well, here he had it, just as it was. Bennie looked at Nowak, looked at him with his hard, measuring brown eyes. "Tommy," he said, "aren't you in the Numbers racket?"

"Object, object," Lordy said. And the judge looked at Bennie with a reproving eye, as if to say: you know better than that.

Joe was, to a slight degree, incensed. If Nowak was in the Numbers racket, why couldn't Bennie bring it out? But now he remembered something Bennie had told him, you couldn't bring out something that wasn't "collateral" to the case. "That's all," Bennie said. Nowak, his cut-glass eye glaring at Bennie as if to say: I'll get you, you Jew-bastard, left the stand.

Ward Chairman Schikerle was the next witness. It became plain that Lordy had carefully built his case. Greeny Murowski put in the assault, Tommy Nowak and the pool cue had established the battery, fat, greying Ward Chairman Schikerle was putting in the intent to kill. He told how Joe had said, "I'll kill you. I'll tear you in half!" And again Bennie, knowing this was true, had no good thing to do. He did what he could. "Mr. Schikerle," he said, "weren't you chairman of the Bund meeting after Pearl Harbor?"

Lordy objected. And Judge Farjeon, who didn't like Bund meetings any better than Bennie, nevertheless gave him the reproving eye. "I'll have to caution you," he said.

There followed now a string of minor witnesses who built up the intent to kill, these including Mrs. Plaki and Oddie Simmons, at whom Bennie took a shake, saying, "Oddie, weren't you convicted of highway robbery?" And in the shadows of the afternoon, Dr. Tartaglia was put on the stand.

Dr. Tartaglia had not been in court that morning; he had come in a little while ago. Joe remembered him as the plump, humane-looking Italian who had been bandaging the Squire when he himself had first come to. He remembered Dr. Tartaglia pointing to him and saying, "What do we do about him?" and Stoney saying, "Nothing." He had nothing against the doctor, and a certain sympathy for him, based on something Bennie had told him. Dr. Tartaglia, according to Bennie, was a poor boy and a good doctor, who had had a hard time getting started. Somewhere along the way he had fallen into Stoney's clutches, a matter of repairing an occasional gunshot wound. Joe guessed these wounds were not reported to the police. Nevertheless, according to Bennie, Tartaglia was a good doctor, and not a bad fellow.

Dr. Tartaglia went to the stand, holding a large manila envelope under his arm. Upon being sworn he told the Squire's

condition when he first had seen him after the attack, the number of wounds, their type, their depth. Now he described Stoney's gasping for breath, how he had felt his ribs, insisted upon X-rays being taken.

"Are those the X-rays?" Lordy said, pointing to the large manila envelope.

"Those are the X-rays," Dr. Tartaglia said.

"May I see them?" Lordy said, and he was holding them up to the light. Joe glanced sideways and saw that the jury had its eyes fastened on the X-rays. Not only were their eyes fastened, but their faces in the lengthening shadows seemed white and drawn with another's pain.

Lordy, having finished holding the X-rays up to the light, handed them back to the doctor. "What do they show?" he said. And Dr. Tartaglia, indicating three streaks with his index finger, "Three ribs broken," he said.

Now Lordy asked him a few questions about the Squire's condition as of the present. Was he in a cast? Dr. Tartaglia said no, the Squire was no longer in a cast, but securely bandaged. Lordy nodded, his heavy face thoughtful and grave. "That's all," he said.

And he asked that the X-rays be marked Exhibit C.

Bennie was a little perplexed as he approached Dr. Tartaglia. They might be pulling something, he didn't know. But he saw that the X-rays had perforations on the border; these perforations spelled the name of a well-known hospital. "Doctor," he said, "were these taken at the hospital?"

"They were," Dr. Tartaglia said.

Well, thought Bennie, Tartaglia wouldn't lie about that. If it was a lie, he could catch up with him. There was the matter of gunshot wounds, but Tartaglia was basically a decent guy, why go into that? And looking at Dr. Tartaglia, "That's all," he said.

There was again, from the citizenry around Stoney, a sigh of triumph and relief. Stoney, Joe noticed, like the hard old customer he was, took it in a grave way. He kept his face set, his eyes looking out the window . . . and the members of the jury looked at him with obvious sympathy, an old man, beaten up that way.

Now court was adjourned for the day. The jury filed out, Joe again noting their sympathy for Stoney, and one or two eyes with a depth of revulsion and contempt for himself. But the most

interesting eye, he thought, was the judge's eye, with a shadow of foreboding as it cast itself upon Bennie. The judge seemed to say: I'm for justice, all right, but so far the justice seems to be on the Squire's side.

Joe, like the loser, stayed to the last. He could see from Bennie's eyes that it was just as well they stayed to the last. Let the conquering heroes go, Bennie seemed to say. The Squire went out, his constables, his onhangers. The judge too had gone, and Lordy. By now the old tipstaff was the only functionary left in court. And Bennie, who had been shuffling papers, just to shuffle them, looked at Joe, gave him the nod.

They left the court, but still they could not say much. For going down the hall and down the elevator was a sort of triumphal processional for Bennie, people saying, "Hyah, Ben . . . Howya doin', kid? . . . I hear you gotta tough one, Ben." And Bennie smiling, his hard brown eyes lit with the light of previous successes, never for an instant giving away the downcast feeling that Joe knew he had, but smiling and saying, "Hyah, Counsellor . . . Hyah, Willie . . . Hyah, Judge."

But once they were out on the street, going toward the Bridge of Sighs, they stopped to look at each other. Bennie bought a paper, showed him a picture on the front page—the Squire.

They looked at each other. Joe was thinking about something he thought Bennie was thinking about, that night in Bennie's kitchen when Bennie had implied they would do better with a plea of self-defence, and he had said, "No, Ben, I want it just the way it was."

Well, he had it just the way it was. "When do we get started, Ben?" he said.

Bennie stood there thinking. "To-morrow," he said.

"Call Joe Drew."

Joe took the stand.

What was his name? "Joe Drew."

His occupation? "Up till recently, a Marine."

"Did you see active duty?" Joe nodded. Bennie asked him where. "Guadalcanal."

"Didn't you also," said Bennie, "serve on Florida, and Bougainville and——"

Lordy O'Leary said, "Object, Your Honour, to counsel leading

the witness." Besides, he thought, the uniform was the sole defence, he might as well bust it now. "Besides, Your Honour," he said, "the uniform is not on trial."

Bennie looked at him. "Would ask the District Attorney not to tell me what's on trial. I know what's on trial," he said. "The District Attorney only knows about a uniform and a pool cue, but there are other factors in this case." He saw the judge about to caution him, and turning to Joe—

"Did you," said he, "at the time and place claimed, enter the premises of Squire J. Stoneham Pike and assault him as charged? Answer yes or no."

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Now," said Bennie, "tell us why."

"Because," said Joe, "of something he did to a girl."

"What girl?" said Lordy, springing up. He was taken unawares. He had heard nothing of any girl. All he knew, as Bennie said, was about a uniform and a pool cue. "What girl?" he said. "Where is this girl, can you produce her? Your Honour"—and he began stating his objection. Meanwhile Bennie, clutching the lapel of his coat, was looking at the glass-panelled door of the court, nodding to Miss Annie Aiggers of his office, who stood there. The clutching of the coat lapel was a prearranged signal; at this Miss Aiggers was to open the door and bring in Stella Witowski.

Miss Aiggers was a small, frumpy woman, a lawyer in Bennie's office. She sometimes shepherded people in and out of courts for Bennie. By her manner of shepherding the younger girl and by Stella's manner of entering the court, dressed in black as Bennie had suggested, her blue eyes averted, her golden hair down about her shoulders, it was plain that she was the girl they were talking about.

Bennie looked at Joe and said, "Is the girl in this court?"

"Yes."

"Point her out," Bennie said.

Joe looked at her, into her beautiful face, her eyes averted, and indicating her, "That's the girl," said he.

And for the first time, delicately, tenderly, her eyes raised to his for an instant . . . and his lips formed words: hello, sweetheart, he said. And they looked at each other, her beautiful eyes tearful and glossy, Joe himself with a lump in his throat, because it was

a brave thing for her to do, to come into court, and a hell of a thing for him to ask her to do.

Bennie now looked at him and said, "Now, it was because of this girl that you beat the Squire?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, why," said Bennie, "should you beat the Squire because of this girl?"

"Because he attacked her."

People looked at each other.

Bennie said, "What do you mean, attacked her?"

Joe looked at Stell, seated now on a bench. She held her face down, her head in her hands, he could see by her shoulders that she was crying. Joe said, "Attacked her physically, criminally."

A man sneaked down the aisle, something black held to his dark suit, he knelt by Stella and said, "Say, miss"—in the instant she looked up, he took her picture. The flashlight bulb exploded, the man was gone—but he had been there because Bennie had told Woolbine what he was going to do, and because Woolbine, knowing the case was going badly, said, "They better have a picture in the paper."

It was a shocked court that heard about the Squire's attack on the girl, and saw the young sobbing girl being tricked into a picture. The jury was now looking at Stoney. And Mrs. Bushkill, though perhaps not altogether certain that the story was true, nevertheless felt that this was very grave indeed.

Lordy O'Leary, somewhat narcotized between his desire to object and his desire to have Stoney reveal something which Stoney's grim, set face with the oyster eyes just wouldn't reveal, seemed on the verge of doing something, and then did nothing. Bennie turned to Joe and said, "What is this young lady's name?"

Joe told him. Bennie wanted to know where she lived. Joe told him. Bennie was coming to something, something very grave. "Now what is this girl to you?"

"She is the mother," said Joe, "of my son."

She raised her eyes to him, her large, beautiful, tear-stained eyes, and they gleamed at him with a quality of gratitude, for whatever else it might be to the world, this was the first public acknowledgment between them. And he, looking at her, again silently formed the words, and smiling a little, hello, sweetheart, he said.

And she looked at him, her eyes brimming with tears and with joy, as if in this moment she had experienced an ecstasy above all else in the world. It was not lost upon Mrs. Bushkill, who dropped her eyes and gulped.

"Now," said Bennie, "when was the boy born?"

"When I was overseas."

"And how," said Bennie, "did it happen that this girl" (pointing) "got to know that man?" indicating the Squire.

"Because she went to him," Joe said, "about the baby."

"Why?"

"Because he was the Squire, she thought he could help her."

"Now all this happened," Bennie said, being as slow as molasses (when you're sure, you can go slow, he used to say), "now all this happened while you were away?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's when the Squire attacked her?"

Lordy objected, saying that all such references to the attack, if any, were not permissible unless the girl first testified to the supposed attack. "Just trying to save the time of the court," Bennie said. But again he got in the idea that the girl had been attacked while the young man was away. And turning to Joe——

"Now that's the story," Bennie said, "you told me, when you first came to see me?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's why you beat up the Squire?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's the truth," Bennie said, "the whole truth, so help you God?"

"So help me God," Joe said.

Bennie turned to Lordy. "Your witness," said he.

Your witness, thought Lordy. Good grief, what a time to go at a witness. And Stoney's face was grey and unrevealing. He wished he could have a few moments with Stoney out in the corridor, but that wouldn't look good. He thought of asking that the whole story be stricken as irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial, but that wouldn't look good. Nothing would look good. He'd better face it. And turning to Joe——

"Now," said Lordy, "did you bear a grudge against this man?" indicating the Squire.

It was a good question; the answer might show intent. Joe was aware of this. Bennie had told him the question would be on the way. And strangely, Bennie had told him to answer yes. As a matter of fact, they had a plot about it.

"Yes," said Joe, "I did bear a grudge."

Lordy nodded. "Since when," he said, "did you bear this grudge?"

"Since," said Joe, "I was a little boy."

"You don't mean to tell me," said Lordy, angrily indicating the girl, "that this went on when you were a little boy?"

Joe shook his head.

"Then why," said Lordy, "should you bear a grudge against this man since you were a little boy?"

"Because," said Joe, "he helped steal my father's inventions."

Lordy didn't know where he was. This was the first he had heard about inventions, and as for the word steal—"Ask the Court," he said, "to admonish the young man about his language." He wished he had never gone into this, but now that he had, "So your father was an inventor?"

Joe said yes.

Lordy said, "Of what?"

"About twenty things on all modern planes."

Lordy looked at him. "Did he get paid for them?"

"Some of them," Joe said; "for a time he did quite well."

Ned Woolbine entered the court.

Lordy was looking at Joe. "Who was your father?" he said.

"James Drew; because he experimented with parachutes he was known as Jumper Drew."

Lordy thought he remembered the Jumper in some early jumps about Pittsburgh. "What," he said, "has that got to do with the Squire?"

Joe pointed to the Squire. "That man foreclosed my father's inventions." There now ensued an argument about the word "foreclosed." Joe always used the word, but it was wrong. A Squire didn't foreclose, there was a constable's sale, but the Squire had had a hand in this. "And," said Joe, nervous, agitated, pointing to the Squire, "that man stole my father's inventions and handed them over to Mr. Osmond of Three Mile Mill."

"Object, object, ask to have stricken," Lordy said. The members of the jury looked at each other. Lordy was arguing with

the judge. Bennie went up to Lordy. "Now listen," he said, "it's your own line of questioning."

Lordy looked back at him as if to say: yes, goddam it, and I'd like to shove it down your throat.

But Lordy was not the man to be stopped by a bad pass. He was a man of considerable dignity, a scholar and something of a gentleman, and going up to Joe again, "Now all this stuff about planes," he said, "if true——"

"I can prove it," Joe said.

"Answer the question," Lordy said. "Now all this stuff about planes, that's not why you beat up this man."

"No, sir."

"You beat him up because of this girl?"

"Yes, sir."

Lordy saw the clock, the achingly slow clock crawl up to twelve. If only the judge would call lunch, if only he could get to see Stoney! Lordy bickered and stalled . . . finally, the judge called lunch.

Lordy O'Leary was not at the moment a happy man. He was a decent customer, and, as Bennie had told Joe, a cut above the average in the District Attorney's office. He had several failings, as Bennie saw it. "He's a lush," Bennie had said; "he loves liquor and he's too philosophic for politics, and he doesn't care for success." And to this Bennie attributed the fact that Lordy was not District Attorney of Allegheny County. "He doesn't want to campaign," Bennie said, "but he knows the law. Somebody in the District Attorney's office gotta know the law," he said, "and he's it, he's been it for over twenty years. We went to school together."

This was the man then, with the greying brown hair, head bobbling forward a little, his back seeming to carry the weight of concern, that Joe saw signalling to Stoney and leaving the court with him.

Lordy and Stoney went to a fish place in the market district. Lordy had a couple of Scotch-and-sodas. Stoney, his grey eyes and his coarse bony face unperturbed, had the lobster dinner. He knew what Lordy wanted to talk about. He wasn't much interested. Ever since the beginning of the case, ever since the boy had come in and beat him up, he had known one thing.

They would, or they wouldn't, spill the beans. If they didn't, that was fine. If they did, that was fine too; he was prepared. He was too big a man, he had led too hard and vigorous a life to give up easily, turn tail, throw up the sponge . . . nor was this posturing with him, he was indeed a hard-bitten man, facing life in his own indomitable grisly way.

Well, let Lordy ask him. As for Lordy, what was he, anyway? "An Assistant D.A." A smart Mick, he knew the law . . . guys like that you hired by the week. And Lordy was an appointee, a political appointee, for all he had held the job all these years. But one word to the right people, and he would no longer hold the job. And so, satisfied with his summation of the situation, patiently, patiently Stone munched the bones, looking over a claw to see if there was anything left.

By now Lordy had had three or four Scotches, and picked around at his scrod (why the hell eat scrod, Stoney thought) . . . he saw now Lordy's eyes settle on him, something in them decent and crying and wanting to know. "Stone," Lordy said, "what is there to this thing?"

Stone said, "The girl?"

Lordy nodded. "The girl."

"She came to me," Stone said. He seemed patient, calm, worried about it. "I tried to help her," he said. "But there was no way of doing it." His eyes stared at Lordy. "I suppose she told the fellah a story. That's all," he said.

Well, Lordy didn't know. Stone might be telling the truth. The girl might be trying to blackmail Stone, he didn't know. Stranger things had happened. With his vast experience in the courts and his good-natured cynicism about people in general . . . as a matter of fact, what he wanted was another drink.

But Stone, the old Commander, standing out on deck, on the stern sea of his life with more storm to blow, just looked at him with a cold, salty, oyster eye. He didn't say: you've had enough to drink. He reached for the check, and, looking Lordy in the eye, "You go in there and fight."

Lordy rubbed his tongue against his palate, trying to rub out his desire for another drink. The city, the big man, the 16,000 votes had spoken. He was the appointee. He had been told to go in there and fight, he had nothing to do but go in there and fight.

But he felt mean. And getting Joe on the stand—"Now you

admit," he said, "you went in there and battered the Squire?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now," said Lordy, "are you accustomed to taking the law into your own hands?"

"No, sir."

"Why did you do it this time?"

I wanted to, Joe thought. "I don't know," he said.

Lordy said, "If what you allege is true, why didn't you call the police?"

Joe looked at him. He had the feeling the guy was giving it to him. The big bulk was coming at him, finger shaking at him, head bobbling forward—

"Well, go on," Lordy said; "speak up. I notice you speak up well enough about the aeroplane. Why didn't you call the police?"

Joe had only one truthful answer. "It wouldn't have satisfied me."

"Wouldn't have satisfied you!" Lordy cried. "Then you did," he said, "take the law into your own hands."

Bennie objected. Lordy roared on, "Well, come on, you're so frank about these things. You beat an older man, you might have caused his death. You understand that, don't you?" he said.

Bennie objected. "Well, say something, out with it," Lordy said.

Joe swallowed, he shook his head, he didn't know what to say.

"Without the intervention of these men"—Lordy pointed to Stoney's constables and followers—"don't you realize you might have killed him?"

"No, sir. I didn't want to kill him," Joe said.

"You didn't want to kill him," Lordy said. "But you said, 'I'll kill you, I'll tear you in half.' Do you deny you said these things?"

"I don't know," Joe said.

"You don't know what?" Lordy said.

"I don't know what I said."

"In the heat of the moment, then," Lordy said, "you said anything that came into your head?"

"Well, yes, sir, I suppose so," Joe said.

"You suppose," Lordy said. He lunged at him, "How do we know, if you have so little control—how do we know you didn't mean to kill him?"

And the massacre was on. When you get an experienced prosecutor like Lordy, and an inexperienced witness like Joe, it is quite likely the prosecutor can freeze him, daze him, make him feel that he is wrongly accused, but strangely unable to defend himself. Joe was no exception. He had an absolute feeling of why he had beaten Stoney, and of being right about it, but at the moment he couldn't summon these things. Come on, he said to himself, fight. He tried, but he seemed unable to get hold of something within himself, to lift it, bring it out. When he finally managed to bring something out—"Answer the question," Lordy roared.

The question now was how did they know, when Joe walked in there, that he didn't mean to kill him? Well, thought Joe, how did they know? Patiently, he tried to explain how he had thought it over, how he tried to keep himself from going off half-cocked, how he thought it all over before he walked in there——

"Then you premeditated this," Lordy said.

The sucker, he thought. And looking into the young man's dark eyes: you tried to make a chump out of me this morning, but I've got you now! He let Bennie object and try to save the kid, but he knew Judge Farjeon would give him the nod, which he did. "Well, come on," Lordy said, "you premeditated this."

Joe was shaking his head. He seemed white, his black eyes staring out of his head, a nervous hand going through his hair. "No, I just thought about it," he said. "I tried to keep myself from going off and doing——"

"Doing what?"

"Something I'd regret." He had no sooner said this, than he felt it was wrong.

"Then you didn't regret this?" Lordy said.

Joe swallowed. The truth, the truth, he said to himself. If he told the truth he wouldn't get mixed up, at least it would be less mixed up. Besides, every dog has his day. He'd have his day. He remembered Hill 3. They had their day . . . and suddenly, with the thought of the guys out there, there was calm. Dignity and calm. He looked at Stell. Dear beautiful Stell. And looking Lordy in the eye—"I'd do it again," he said.

Bennie objected, on grounds of bullying the witness, it was the best he could do, he himself had expected no such turn of events. Lordy just threw up his hands. He turned to the judge. "Your

Honour," he said, "without any reflection on counsel for the defence, I think this young man" (he indicated the Marine) "has not been properly acquainted with the law, or perhaps does not understand. Considering his youth and record in the Service, perhaps the Court might advise him as to the seriousness of the charges against him."

"He knows the seriousness of the charges," Bennie said.

"Well, he does not seem to realize," Lordy said. He turned to Joe, began leading him over familiar ground, and suddenly—"Now, part of the story," he said, "is that this girl had a child by you."

Joe nodded.

"Are you married to this girl?"

Joe felt dazed. He looked at Stell, her glistening, beautiful, anguished eyes. "No," he said.

Lordy threw up his hands, then turning to Joe: "Do you know what you've admitted?"

Joe didn't know, not exactly. He supposed that under the law this was adultery, or bastardy, or something.

"All right," said Lordy, "let's go on." He looked at Joe, the dark, bedevilled eyes, the blue uniform. "Let me ask you something," he said. "If you love this girl enough, according to you, to beat up people for her, why don't you marry her?"

I would if I wasn't in this jam, Joe thought. But something came to him now. He looked at Lordy. "That isn't the point," he said.

Lordy was about to say: don't tell me what the point is. But then, thinking the sucker might incriminate himself, "What is the point?"

"The point is," said Joe, "why a man like that" (pointing to Stoney) "should be allowed to have power over people, to rape them——"

"Object, object," Lordy was shouting, his big face steaming, and he started an argument about having it stricken. Ben looked at the kid with a great big smile. The sucker, he had almost thrown the case away, but now he had it back. And he himself was about to cross the Rubicon. For despite his pleasantries with Stoney at the beginning of the trial, he was going to come out against him now. "Your Honour," said Bennie, "we have come to the whole point of the case. It is all very well for the

District Attorney," he said, "to mix the witness up on a few small points. But," he said, "there is a higher justice, a higher law."

Lordy stared at him. "We're not trying higher justice, higher law, we're trying felonious assault and battery."

"You asked him a question," Bennie said, pointing to Joe, "he answered it."

"Very good," said Lordy. He was very serious. "If this is a question of law, of higher law—Your Honour," he said, "the State rests. The case of felonious assault and battery has not only been proved but admitted. The intent to kill has been testified to by these witnesses," waving at them. "All else testified to in this case, from the history of the aeroplane to the love life of Joe Drew, is immaterial, irrelevant, and inconsequential, and move it be stricken from the record."

It was a wonderful move, and Bennie understood it, it might preclude Stella's taking the stand. "Just a minute," Bennie said, and looking at Lordy, "You know this young man is entitled to defence."

"What is the defence?" said Lordy. "I haven't heard any defence."

Bennie pointed to Stella—"That young lady is the chief witness to this man's defence."

"Now, how," said Lordy, "can the defence in one case be another case, even if by the wildest dreams everything you allege is true?"

This was the moment Bennie needed Judge Farjeon for. "Judge," he said, looking into his eyes, "this young man is accused of a very serious thing. He did it for a reason. We have a right to put the matter in evidence." And he began to argue about relevancy. The point at issue was whether evidence as to the alleged abuse of Stella Witowski at the hands of the Squire was a related fact, to be allowed in evidence here, was *relevant*—or whether, as Lordy now contended, that was a separate case, and could only come up if Stella first went to the District Attorney or some Squire and made an Information against Stoney which would become the basis of her case.

Bennie had prepared for this moment and now he quoted a classic definition of relevancy. "Facts," he said, "whether in issue or not, are relevant to each other when one is, or probably may

be, the cause of the other." And his tanned, competent face beamed upon Judge Farjeon, as if the day were won.

But Judge Farjeon was not the man to be taken in so easily. It was a fine legal point, and he recognized the "preparation." So did Lordy. Lordy looked at Bennie as if to say: what's got into you? He knew Bennie, knew him well, he was Newsboy Bennie, the guy for the fix, the good-fellowship, the deal. In the thousands of cases he had tried with him, Bennie had never put on the mantle of "the brain." And here he was, with a fine legal point. Irrate as he was, Lordy was amused.

Judge Farjeon looked at Bennie, his watery blue eyes beneficent and a smile crinkling up his long dark face. It was a matter for Solomon. Both men were right, in a way. Yet it was the function of a court, its highest function, to promote justice. Nevertheless, he did not want a reversal, trouble, complications. And what did this Pittsburgh criminal lawyer know about relevancy, anyway? He looked at Bennie. "You have witnesses?" said he.

Bennie indicated the girl in the case, the girl in black with the blue eyes and the long blonde hair. "That's the main witness," he said.

Somehow, possibly because of its reiteration, it made a profound impression in court, Joe could see. The members of the jury leaned forward, looking at Stell, wanting her to get on the stand. There was something about them, Joe thought, that would feel cheated if she were not on the stand, and this was beginning to persuade the court.

Lordy did his best to preclude Stella's taking the stand. It was not merely that he was not altogether sure of Stoney, and that for his side it was better to have the girl off the stand, but it was to him truly a matter of law. And he expounded it.

Bennie let him go on, for he saw that these legalistics only annoyed the jury. When Lordy had finished, Bennie addressed the jury, though seeming to address himself to the judge, the District Attorney. "How do you mean to tell me," he said, looking at Lordy, "you would exclude the main witness to this young man's defence?" And walking past him, he turned his brown eyes upon the jury, almost as if to say: what do you think of that?

And Lordy, seeing his cause waver, looked at Bennie. "She'll be subject to cross-examination," he said darkly.

And Bennie nodded, now casting his eyes at Mrs. Bushkill and some members of the jury as if to say: that's all right with me.

And when finally he could proceed—"Stella Witowski," he said, "take the stand."

Stella stood there in the twilight, tall, willowy, her golden hair hanging down to her thin shoulders, the little gold cross flashing from her neck.

She made an indefinable impression as she stood there, her blue eyes humiliated and confused, her cherry lips atremble, and Bennie slowly leading her to the stand.

"Just a moment." It was Judge Farjeon, speaking to Bennie before she could be sworn. "Have you any considerable amount of testimony?"

"Yes, Your Honour," said Bennie, "we have."

"Well," said Judge Farjeon, "I think we had better adjourn for the day." It was nearly five.

This was exactly what Bennie wanted, for Stella, standing there in her sexy beauty, humiliation and confusion, her eyes cast down and the little cross swinging and flashing, had created something, he knew, more powerful than words. And what she had created, without trying, would hang over till to-morrow.

Again Joe and Bennie and Stella and Miss Aiggers stayed to the last. Before they left court, Ned Woolbine, who had left earlier in the day, walked in with a newspaper, signalled Joe, opened the paper for him. It was the latest edition of the *Clarion*, and, turning to an inner page, Woolbine showed him a feature story: "Early History of Aeroplane Comes in at Trial . . . Son of Inventor Claims 'Stoney' Pike Involved in Fraudulent Seizure of Inventions . . . Old Pittsburgh Case Involved in Newest Sensation." It was a stunning page, with a picture of Joe's father, a picture of one of his early planes, several pictures of his inventions. And under his pseudonym of "The Observer," Woolbine explained the relationship of these old inventions to their new forms, and referred to Jumper Drew's case against Mr. Osmond.

Joe looked gratefully into the dark, handsome, rather brusque face of Ned Woolbine. "I don't know what to say, Ned," he said.

Woolbine waved it off, and showed him the front page:

SQUIRE ACCUSED

Marine Says Girl He Left Behind
Him Victimized by "Stoney" Pike

Queer Case in which Accused
Accuses Accuser

There was quite a story. Grateful as he was, Joe could only think of one thing. "Ned, how could you do it so fast?"

And Woolbine, smiling, and in a manner deprecating himself, said, "Don't be a sucker." He indicated the inside page. "That was prepared. All we needed," he said, "was enough mention in court for us to slap it in. I merely phoned your Uncle Charlie."

Bennie and Stell and Miss Aiggers looked over the stories; their eyes met, they all understood the significance of it, he was no longer a guy with a pool cue, but rather, before the world, someone with some kind of background, some kind of case.

"I think this calls for a celebration," Bennie said. "After I go over to the office, let's go to the house."

Joe looked at Stell. He could see, from her flashing blue eyes—she seemed so much more beautiful to him since their public trouble, since she had been in court—he could see she wasn't altogether happy and he understood her reluctance. Outside of the fact that these people were strange to her, she resented those night conferences with Bennie. In fact, he knew there was a factor between Bennie and Stell that made for trouble. But he saw now that she would come. Bennie called his wife and said, "Rose, I'm bringing a gang for dinner." And Woolbine called his wife, and asked her to meet them at Bennie's.

Joe began to see something that he both liked and didn't like; the case was making him part of the world, giving him friends. It was strange, to make friends out of trouble.

He thought of Ron.

And Ron's father. "Ned," he said, "how does your paper get away with that stuff?"

And Ned explained. The *Clarion*, though having a great circulation in Pittsburgh, was not a Pittsburgh paper. It was one of the Fay-McSway papers. "It's no more a Pittsburgh paper than the Pittsburgh Pirates are a Pittsburgh ball club." Joe knew what he meant. "Newspapers have gone chain store," Woolbine said,

"and it's good and it's bad." It made for a certain freedom in local issues, he explained. "Because," he said with something of a hollow laugh, "we're a crusading newspaper. But on the international front, we're just a goddam fascist sheet."

It was strange, Joe thought, elements of newspaperdom, chain-store methods, mechanics of civilization . . . somehow related to his case. Woolbine explained how he could burn up Osmond. "He had a run in with McSway," he said, "so I'm pretty free there, as long as I don't go too far."

And now they went out to the house. Bennie's wife, one of those small, stocky, warm-hearted women, made them welcome, and showed Stell the baby. And Mrs. Woolbine, with her gold-flecked eyes, something distant and ladylike and not quite satisfied about her, smiled at him and at Stell, and tried to contribute a quality of worldliness and long friendship.

Stell, he noticed, was suddenly having a wonderful time, for these were people of distinct and individual personalities, and they talked about the world, and Pittsburgh, and the little farm Woolbine was hoping to buy.

Joe still wanted to know something, and taking Woolbine off to another room, and looking into the large, brown, luminous, rather far-seeing eyes, "Ned," he said, "have you got something against Stoney Pike?"

Ned Woolbine smiled. He smiled in a way that told you he wouldn't tell you the whole story, just its shadow. "Well," he said, "I believed in him. Believe it or not, once he was a decent man. But," he said, now sombre, with the quality of sweeping his own feelings away, "he's a conscious villain. I hate a conscious villain," he said. "The world's gone through too much for that sort of thing."

When they went back to the living-room, Joe saw that Stella and Bennie were not there. "They're in the den," Mrs. Jordan said. "I guess he wants to talk to her about the trial."

He noticed, as Stell came in, her beautiful eyes were ragged and tear-stained. They went home fairly early, Joe trying not to think of trouble, he was enjoying Stell's tallness as he walked with her, wanting to feel her skinny shoulder against his arm. It was amazing, he thought, how much sex, warmth, she could give him out of her shoulder. And too, sometimes as they walked,

she somehow gave him the touch of her breast to his arm, the sensation seemed to pervade his whole being.

But none of that was there to-night. He knew he was going wrong, but he just couldn't help it. "Stell," he said, "did you and Bennie get set?" He meant about the trial.

"Please, Joe," she said, looking down at the sidewalk, "please, I can't." He felt he better say no more about it. For he knew, for all her being in court, she hated it. He had a pretty good hunch as to what Bennie had talked to her about, but if he rubbed her the wrong way, at the last moment she wouldn't be on the stand.

But she was.

Bennie led her through her story. He started with her name, her address, her occupation—welder.

Had she always been a welder? No, just since she thought she ought to take part in the war. What had she been before? She had worked in a department store.

"Go on," said Bennie, "tell the court what happened." And with his help, she told it, the night Joe went away, the baby, her first interview with Stoney, the second, how he propositioned her——

"What did you say?"

"No."

"And," said Bennie, referring to the Squire, "what did he say?" She told what Stoney had said—"You'll be sorry."

"And," said Bennie, "were you sorry?"

"Yes, sir, I'm sorry I ever saw him." She kept her eyes down, her long hands fidgeting.

"Now," said Bennie, "what happened next?"

She looked at Stoney, and pointing to him, "He had my father fired from Three Mile Mill."

Three Mile Mill, it created a sensation. Photographers set their flashlight bulbs off—you could almost see the story, under the picture of Stell: SAYS SQUIRE HAD FATHER DISMISSED FROM THREE MILE MILL. The members of the jury were looking at Stoney, Lordy was looking at him . . . something reverberated in court, Stoney had given the inventions to the mill, now it was said he had the girl's father fired there . . . could it be he had such power?

The judge informed the Press that there would be no more pictures taken in his court. Bennie tried to get the case under

control. Stella was sobbing now. But somehow, he led her through it, how Stoney had told her her father could never go back to work unless she gave in . . . Joe, looking at her, felt it was almost more than he could bear. He had gotten her into it, but to see her there, her beautiful face raw and tear-stained, her eyes like bits of torn blue ribbon, Jesus, he said to himself.

"Now," said Bennie, "did you try to do anything about it?" He was referring to her father's being fired—and slowly, haltingly, between sobs, she told of going to Stoney's apartment.

"And then?" Bennie asked.

"I can't, I can't," she cried, and buried her face in her hands, sobbing. Bennie looked at Judge Farjeon. The judge, he could tell, was greatly touched, his eyes reflecting that he realized something of this was true. He nodded to Bennie; he could take his time.

And finally Bennie got the story out, the whole ugly story. And he led Stella, shaken and sobbing, over to Joe. Joe put his arms about her, and she flung her arms about him. "Oh, Joe," she sobbed. "Oh, Joe."

The jury looked on, at this soldier and girl of the war . . . its own eyes with a sort of battered, life-seeing sympathy.

Lordy looked at Stoney. Stoney's eyes were impassive, grave, as if he too were vaguely touched. Christ, Lordy said to himself, what do I do?

When he could, he again asked His Honour that all this be stricken from the record, that it didn't belong—"We're not going to have relevancy again?" Bennie said.

And they looked at each other, these two professional opponents who had had so many bouts. And for once, Woolbine thought, there was something distinctly acrimonious about Lordy's big face, almost swollen with distaste.

The judge, however, indicated that the testimony could stand for the present. Lordy said, "Exception." Then he looked at the clock. It was not yet twelve, though Stella's sobbing and halting had drawn the story out. She was still huddled and sobbing on the Marine's shoulder. Christ, Lordy thought, I can't examine her this way. He turned to the judge. "Your Honour," he said, "as this seems no time for cross-examination, and as we are only a little before twelve, may I suggest a break for lunch?"

His Honour nodded.

Bennie, standing over Stella, Joe, and Miss Aiggers, who was also trying to calm her, said, "You better take her out for lunch." As he didn't get on very well with her, he left himself out of it.

"I don't want lunch," Stella cried. "I don't care whether you want it or not," Bennie said, and turning to Joe and Miss Aiggers, "He'll probably have her on the stand all afternoon. Now take her out." And he turned away, feeling peculiarly lonely, as he had felt during certain fights.

Lordy was watching him. He had an exact approximation of Bennie's tactics and feelings. He also, as he saw the Squire and his followers slowly leave the court, had a fairly exact approximation of what they wanted. The Squire, his eyes upon him, seemed to say: I want to see you. His eyes further said: We better get together, maybe we can do something about this. Come on, you're my man, I'm depending on you.

But Lordy, at the moment, was inclined to take no summons from the Squire. As he had looked on at the girl sobbing and flinging her arms about the boy, something had reached him, some of her story was true. And he would be goddamned, he told himself, if he was going to stooge for this sort of thing. Yes, he was the prosecution. But he wasn't the Squire's attorney for the defence. Yes, he was the "Assistant District Attorney," the appointee, but still he had a soul somewhere he was going to call his own. To hell with the Squire, he was going to do his duty and that was that. He was going to be what he called "a high-class Irishman." Besides, there was something else that mattered to him. "Ben," he said, going up to him, "I want to talk to you."

The hard brown eyes looked into those dull eyes . . . both men went out into the corridor, the corridor they both knew so well, the tobacco-splattered corridor of this Hall of Justice, the spittoon-ensconced corridor, this corridor worn by the tread of so many feet, this corridor in which the eternal fat man waddled along, this corridor with the eternal poor woman with her stockings wrinkled down about her ankles, this corridor which to them was filled with the ghosts of their lives, the men and women they had saved, the men and women they had sent away, the lives and passions they had wrangled over and smiled over, the Via Dolorosa of Pittsburgh where they had found their pennies, their pickings, their aspects of local fame. . . .

"Come here, Ben," and Lordy lolled to the side, looking out a

window, a window that looked out on the moody day. The Squire and the rest of them had gone. Bennie waited. Now Lordy's eyes, green-brown under the glasses, puzzled and crying, looked at him. "What is it, Ben?" he said.

Ben knew what he meant, he meant: what makes you different this time?

Lordy said, "It can't be the money, Ben."

Ben almost smiled. If only Lordy knew how little it was, it was still only fifty dollars.

"It can't be just that you don't like the Squire?"

Ben looked at him, his dark, competent face in the shadows, his hard eyes as if measuring for a blow. I'm not so sure, he almost seemed to say.

"No," said Lordy, watching him, "it's something else." And he looked at him as if about to give it to him. "It can't be your goddam Jewish conscience, can it?" Lordy said.

He went on, "My God, you know I'm no Jew-baiter, Ben." Ben knew. "But what the hell else is it, what keeps you going this way? You didn't come to me for a deal," Lordy said.

It was the first time in twenty years they had used the word. Though they never used it, it always hung in the air over Lordy's Scotch-and-soda and Bennie's beer when they sat around drinking in a certain café, drinking and swapping stories and getting lush and moody with the broken chromatics of late-at-night piano playing. The next day they would stand in court, Ben defending some pickpocket who would say, "They planted it on me," and Lordy in his amused, tired, good-humoured way saying, "The same old story, Your Honour."

That was Lordy's standard line. And when he said that, it was like a signal, they both went up to the judge's bench. Bennie would say something about saving the court time and money, and Lordy would say that being the defence was willing to save the court's time, he would be satisfied with a short sentence.

So the deal was made.

But this time it was different. This time, thought Lordy, it was in reverse. And looking Ben in the eye, "Ben," he said, "can't we make a deal?"

What had spoken through him he did not know. He did not know that Stoney would accept a deal, but he would recommend it. He wished to be rid of this thing. He would advise Stoney to

drop the charges, the girl too would stop talking, bygones be bygones.

But Bennie knew Joe would accept no deal. He knew it, that's all. He himself might have wished this case to end that way, at least he could be sure of the boy getting off. To think of it, for the first time in twenty years the D.A. had offered him a deal, and he had to—his hard, brown eyes looked at Lordy, he shook his head.

There would be no deal.

Lordy sighed. He had a heavy, fat, resigned look about him, with dull staring eyes, like the condemned.

He was condemned. Not merely to go on with the case. But to a whole way of life. He was the appointee. Little as Stoney bothered with such things as who were the assistant district attorneys, without his support, with his manifest ill will, that was the end.

He had to go on. Defend, not only Stoney, but Stoney's way of life. And with it a sort of resentment came to him. Who was Ben Jordan to condemn him? And what was this case, this one figment of the right, if it was that? Would this one figment make any difference?

He looked at Bennie, Bennie of all the deals, Bennie the pick-pockets' friend, Bennie the whore woman's last resort, Bennie of a thousand shabby deals all under the guise of: a man is entitled to defence. "Do you know what you're doing, Ben?" he said. "Do you realize that politically you'll be through?" He knew that once a man was bitten by the bug of being judge he was always bitten. "What is this?" he said. "Suppose you are in the right for once? Let's say you win this case—next week it'll be the pickpocket and the whore. And you'll be coming to me for a deal."

Bennie began to feel it, his throat tightened, so many times he had known the criminal or the fool with the tightened throat. He felt it now. But, "That's next week," he said.

"What's the good?" Lordy said. "Suppose you do one good deed, you're no anarchist, tearer-downer, changer of systems." He indicated the corridor, the criminal courts. "This is your life, Ben. Suppose you do knock one Squire down, are you going after all the Squires of Pittsburgh? Most of 'em stink, you know it and I know it, but are we going to fix up the whole thing? For Christ's sake, Ben," he said. He said it softly, it meant: I appeal to your

reason. "Be sensible," Lordy said. "Suppose you do one good deed, what's one good deed in the whole blasted way things are?"

Bennie looked at him, he didn't know. "It's one," he said.

"Oh for Christ's sake," Lordy said. "Be regular. You were always regular, be regular."

That was it, Bennie thought, the cry of the world: be regular. Do as we do, don't do anything else, never be different, if we stink you stink. How well he knew, hadn't he been that way himself, hadn't he been that way all his life?

He too now felt like the condemned, condemned to be irregular, to be honest for once, for once to fight for something above technicalities, and pay the price, which might be the loss of Lordy's friendship, the friendship of other people.

Lordy made a concluding remark. "Christ," he said, "I wish I had a drink." His throat frogged up. He looked out the window. Down there, below, was a saloon, another saloon, another. He knew he wouldn't stop at one drink. "I guess we better stay here," he said.

Within himself: he's killing me, Bennie said. He used "kill" in the slang sense, as it was used in saloon and night-club society. It indicated a deep plucking at the strings of the heart, the consciousness. It was the thought of Lordy's poor frogged-up throat, his knowing how much Lordy wanted a drink, his knowing that Lordy was essentially a decent guy that made him feel: he's killing me. Bennie thought of the cafés they had known, the piano-playing.

But the time for that sort of thing had gone. They saw the old tipstaff, "Admiration" Jones, carefully deposit the butt of his cigar in the cuspidor, return to the court. Others returned to the court. Soon they would have to return to the court. They looked at each other, the dull, mottled eyes and the hard, brown eyes . . . Bennie remembered that Lordy had been a choir-boy. Lordy remembered Bennie's family, and the chicken noodle soup. Oh how, how, on the backs of vice and crime they had risen through the city, through human life, and viewed some of its peaks. And Lordy, looking at him, at the "Newsboy" he remembered out on the streets and blindly stumbling in the ring: I love him, he thought.

For Lordy, like many a lush, felt he loved men, loved liquor, loved God, Christ, books, abstract justice—the word "love" was

quite a universal word to him, attached to a universal joint, he could throw it into almost any gear of life, and looking at Bennie, "I love you, kid," he said. He indicated the court. "But I'm going in there and cut your throat."

And Bennie, looking at him, thought possibly he could do it. "Well, if that's the way it is," he said.

Lordy nodded. "From now on it's a fight to the finish," he said.

Lordy had Stella on the stand.

"Now, miss," he said, "the night you met the Marine, the night he was leaving town, what were you doing?"

"Walking."

He asked her where and with whom. She told him. He said, "Where do they work?"

"The Pittsburgh Store."

"Oh," he said, "the Pittsburgh Store." He was now on the familiar track, the department-store girl. "You girls went out." She nodded. "What were you doing?"

Tell the truth, Joe had told her, whatever happens, tell the truth. She said, "Wolfing."

"Oh," he said, "wolfing. Tell the jury what you mean by wolfing."

She told them, picking up fellahs, Army and Navy fellahs, before they picked you up.

"Oh," he said, "wolfing." He looked at her, his eyes keen under the glasses. He said, "Do you do it often?"

"No, sir."

"But you had done it?"

She hesitated. "Yes, sir."

"You were in the habit of doing it?"

"No, sir."

"But you did it often?"

"No, sir."

"How often?"

"Well," she said, "about once or twice a week."

"Don't you think that's often?"

She said nothing.

"And you'd go out with these fellahs?"

"Yes, sir."

There was something ominous about his implication. He had

chosen his words slowly and carefully; "go out" to the older generation meant just one thing, like a waitress would "go out" with men. Lordy glanced at Mrs. Charlotte Bushkill, the implication was not lost on her.

He indicated the Marine. "Then he picked you up?"

"No, sir," she said. "He picked me up, but it wasn't a pick up. I knew him."

"But you just said you picked up men."

She nodded, then she shook her head, she was beginning to feel tangled. "We knew each other," she said.

Lordy nodded, he seemed patient, tolerant, willing to accept her word on that. "Then what did you do?"

"We—we went to the park."

"Oh," he said, "the park." He let it rest for a moment, he seemed patient, brooding, as if he could see the very bushes, the grass, the trees. "Then what?" he said. "Did you know you were going to the park?"

"No, sir."

"You just found yourself there?"

"No," she said, "as we got nearer I knew."

"Oh," he said, "as you got nearer you knew." It sounded full of some special knowledge, some oncoming event.

He said, "What time was it?"

"By that time?"

He nodded.

"About twelve o'clock."

"Twelve o'clock," he said, "midnight." It sounded pretty bad, not at all the thing a good girl would do. He said, "Do you make a habit of going to the park at midnight?"

"No, sir."

"Why did you do it this time?"

"Well, it was his last night and"—she realized suddenly, she hadn't known that till later.

He said, "Then what?"

"We talked."

"Yes," he said, "and then what?"

"Do I have to?"—she looked to the judge, asking him if she had to tell. The judge's face was dark, serious. He nodded. "Well," she said, "he loved me."

"Love—is that your interpretation of love?" Lordy said. He

looked at her. She was fidgeting and twisting on the stand, turning one way and another, her long hands twisting at each other, now nervously touching down her skirt. What thin, beautiful legs she had, Lordy thought, what blazing, hurt, helpless, heart-filled blue eyes, and how she had flung herself against the Marine. Ah, indeed, she was a warm, vibrant, pulsating thing, "a beautiful Polack" as they were known about Pittsburgh. And he was damaging her because of her natural passions, emotions, inclinations. And the little cross at her neck, almost flashing and beseeching to him: why crucify her? She was a Catholic and he was a Catholic, and no doubt Stoney, that dirty man, had done something.

Like the condemned, he went on. "Now," said Lordy, "the baby was conceived because you knew he was going away."

"Yes." That wasn't all here was to it, but it was hard to explain.

"Now," said Lordy, "when this man, the Marine, went away, how did you know he was going away?"

"Because he told me."

"When?"

"When I took him to the train."

"When was that?"

"Four in the morning."

That was the break Lordy was looking for. "But didn't you tell us," he shouted, lunging at her and waving his finger at her, "didn't you tell us the baby was conceived because you knew he was going away?"

Oh my God, that's what she had told him.

"Now," said Lordy, "when first you tell us one thing, and then you tell us another, do you know what it looks like?" She didn't answer. And softly, Lordy said, "It looks like a lie."

Bennie objected, but his objection couldn't very be strong. "No, sir," Stella said, "I didn't lie. It's hard to explain. You mixed me up."

"I?" said Lordy. "I let you say anything you like. Now which was it, the baby was conceived when?"—and he went on, letting her straighten it out, but indicating to the jury that she had lied.

But, now that he had made an issue of her morals and her veracity, his main attack centred on her story of the Squire. He made her go over every little detail. He cast doubt. And suddenly he said, "Squire Pike, stand up!"

And Stoney stood, tall, grey, serious, stooped. "Now do you mean to tell me," Lordy said, pointing to the Squire, "that this man, one of our oldest and best-known public servants, who has sat there, day after day, listening to this testimony, never turning a hair—now do you mean to tell me he attacked you while his wife was there?"

"No, sir," Stella said miserably, "she went out."

Lordy waved the Squire to sit down. "Now, miss," said Lordy, "how old are you?" She told him. He said, "Are you pretty strong?" She said, "Fairly." He said, "Why didn't you resist?"

Miserable and crying, "He knocked me out."

Lordy shook his head. He didn't believe it. Stoney might be bad, but he wasn't that bad. "The Marine got into trouble," Lordy said, "and you made up this story to save him."

"No, sir."

"All right," said Lordy, "tell me this. If the attack took place, why didn't you go to the police?"

Bennie looked at Joe, this was just what he had warned against, this was what all his trouble with Stella was about, he knew just what Lordy was going to do.

"Or, if you didn't go to the police," Lordy said, "why didn't you go to the District Attorney's office? You know about Squire courts," he said, "you've told us you've been there. You know you could have gone to a Squire's court, any Squire's court, and made an Information against this man." He pointed to Stoney.

Stella said nothing, her eyes travelled from one groove of the floor to the other—"Why didn't you?" Lordy was demanding.

"I was too ashamed."

"You were too ashamed," Lordy said, "yet you're not too ashamed to come here. You're not too ashamed to see your picture in the paper"—holding up a paper.

She was, but she hadn't known they were going to take pictures. And besides, having promised to come here, what could she do?

"Did you tell your father and mother?" Lordy said.

"No, sir."

"Did you tell your priest?"

Bennie objected, that was between her and her Church, Judge Farjeon sustained. But Stella, sobbing, sobbed out, "No, sir, I didn't tell anybody, I was too ashamed."

Lordy nodded. He waited patiently. It was a hell of a thing to

go at her like this. Still, there was one thing that was reasonable, that was beyond doubt. "Now look, miss," he said. "I'm the prosecutor here. But I'm also an officer of the law. If this story is true, all you have to do is come to me. I'll help you fill out an Information against that man!" He pointed to Stoney. "And," he said, looking at Stoney, "I'll prosecute him."

It was quite a moment. The court looked at the Honest Prosecutor, at Stoney . . . Bennie was looking at Joe, he had warned him of this all along. It was, as he had said, the weak link in the chain. And Stella's reason was simply no good. "I'll do it for him," she had said, agreeing to go on the stand. But the idea of dragging out a whole case for herself horrified her, she wanted no more of it, she sometimes wished, as she did this minute, that she could just sink through the floor.

"Now, miss," said Lordy, "it doesn't do much good to say things like that here, if you won't back them up."

Her anguished eyes looked at Joe, at Bennie——

"She'll do it," Bennie said. He wasn't sure, he wondered now what would happen if she didn't.

"I can't, I can't," she sobbed. She no longer knew to whom she was talking, the whole place swam before her. "It's awful," she said, "I'd do anything for him," pointing to Joe, "but I just can't for myself, I can't, I can't, I can't, I hate it," she cried. And she broke down.

It was late. Lordy excused her. Bennie helped her from the stand. On the whole, she had lost ground. Her story, once so implicitly believed, was not entirely discredited. The men and women of the jury, as they looked on in the twilight and saw the lean, pale girl, fraught with the tension of cross-examination, were inclined to sympathize with her. Still, there was no doubt about it, she had lied or misstated, who could say? And as the District Attorney said, if all this had happened to her, why didn't she make a complaint?

Bennie was very sombre as he was about to leave court, waving a finger to Joe. And when Joe, leaving Stella to Miss Aiggers for a moment, came up to him, "Listen," Bennie said, "you got to talk to her."

Joe shook his head. There had been too much talking at her already, and she was in such a state. "I can't," he said.

"You got to," Bennie said.

He did, but later, after he had taken her to dinner and a movie. And when he mentioned it her great big eyes had the quality of: so that's why you've been so nice. "Listen, Joe," she said, "do you know how my father and mother feel already?"

He could gather. "Don't you think I've made them enough trouble?" she said.

He felt yes, but that wasn't the point. "Do you think I like it?" said she, as if to say: standing there, before the court, the newspapers, the city?

He got all that. What's more, there was no guarantee, no matter what she did, they would win. It was just a measure, an important measure. And if she didn't want to, she didn't want to. All people had their limitations, maybe she had reached hers.

"Listen, baby," he said, "why have an argument? Just tell me, yes or no."

And with her great eyes upon him, "You're hard, Joe."

I'm not hard, he was going to say, I'm in trouble, I've got to know. But why go on about it?

Perhaps she sensed what he felt, and her eyes pleading with him, "Joe, I can't do any more."

O.K., she couldn't. It was like the war. Some were in up to the neck, some with the feet. And maybe, he thought, if he had loved her more, maybe he'd have more. This on the theory that if a woman loved you enough, she'd do anything. Hell, I'm no great lover, he said to himself.

However, he tried to be smiling and fair about it as he kissed her and said good night. But he felt alone. On the way to his cheap shabby hotel, he bought a paper, not Woolbine's paper, but the bulldog edition of a morning paper. The day's story was there, Stell's testimony in full, and something about "girl wolf."

The time had come, Lordy felt, when he must put his chief witness on the stand. Besides, Stoney wanted to go on the stand, not merely to send the boy up, but because his political life was at stake.

It was a grave and handsome, in a bluff old way, Stoney Pike that took the stand. He seemed strong, hearty, straightforward, for all the ominous tales about him. In his fine dark grey suit, the pearl grey tie with the stickpin, his sunken cheeks and prominent cheekbones, the furzy matting of hair over his long head—he

seemed like some very proper coachman of the old school, an old school barber perhaps, or even an old-time ironmaster or prospector who had struck it rich in the West.

He went to the stand with a fair approximation of the job Lordy was doing. And with an absolute determination (well concealed beneath his grave mien) to catch up with Bennie and Judge Farjeon some day.

That is, if he could hold on, if he could survive.

His way of survival was simple. Take it easy. Don't put it on too thick. Seem strong, hearty, respectable. Never, by the slightest sign, let it be seen that he knew more law than any Squire might be expected to know. And never, for a moment, let it seem that he was wise to, suspected Bennie and Judge Farjeon.

Just be "himself"—that is, the best and simplest aspect of himself he could present.

Lordy was questioning him now, going into the matter of his injuries. And as he had always hated fellahs who went on about stuff like that, he merely admitted them. People would understand, he was a hard customer perhaps, physically strong, but not one to make too much of broken ribs.

"Now," said Lordy, "how old are you?"

"Nearly sixty." (Despite his lack of sureness about his birth, often fancying himself about fifty-seven, Stoney thought it better to make it sixty.)

"Have you any idea," said Lordy, indicating the Marine, "why this young man should attack you?"

The Squire gave the Marine the glance of his salty eye. "None."

Lordy nodded. "Now," he said, "as to the young man's father."

Stoney said, "They came to me for a writ. I'm a Squire. All kinds of people come to me. They make a request, if it's legal I have to honour it." He looked down, rather melancholy, sorry if he had in any way interfered with the inventor's destiny. "Some of these things may seem disagreeable to me, I have to do them, just like the court here." He looked at the judge. "The judge doesn't like everything that comes to his court. Things come here, he has to handle 'em."

Judge Farjeon nodded.

"Now as to the girl," Lordy said. "She came to you." Stoney nodded, her story was right that far. "Though I told her," Stoney said, "she shouldn't have come to me in the first place. I'm not

allowed to give free legal advice," he said. "Though in the neighbourhood, they're slow to accept that." He nodded, halted, as if just a simple honest man telling a simple honest story. "I told her she needed a lawyer. I got her one. Though," he said, "he's just a poor neighbourhood lawyer, I guess he couldn't help her much."

"She came again?" Lordy said.

Stoney nodded. He told how he had gone to the Marines for her, how he had told her nothing much could be done. "But," he said, "she kept hanging around." He indicated Greeny Murowski. "You remember," he said, "I told her not to come around." Greeny nodded. Despite the unconventionality of this procedure, it was allowed.

"Now," said Lordy, "you've heard the accusations here. Let me ask you—did you in any way proposition her?"

Stoney looked at him, his grey eyes thoughtful and calm. He said, "No."

"Have you any idea why she should say so?"

Stoney thought about it. "None."

My God, thought Stella, looking at his cold, bony face, how could he? Yet it was plain, he was going to, he was going to deny it.

"Now as to her father," said Lordy. "Have you any idea why he should be fired?"

Stoney looked at him. "None."

"Have you any influence at the mill?"

"Some," said Stoney, "I used to work there. It's the big mill in my District. Naturally, I know people there."

"Did you know her father?"

"Yes," said Stoney, "a nice man. When she came to me I told her so."

"But you have no idea why he should be fired?"

Stoney looked at him. "None."

Well, thought Joe, this was the goddamdest, the goddamdest thing. He was following Stoney's statements with a mounting intensity, leaning forward, agitated, looking at him.

"Now as to the young lady's claim," said Lordy, "did she come to your home?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I would no longer see her at my office."

Lordy nodded. "Was your wife there?"

"She had to go out," Stoney said.

Lordy nodded. "Now as I understand it, she asked you to help her father go back to work."

Stoney nodded. "I told her there wasn't much I could do. Though some people in the neighbourhood think a Squire can do anything, but there's a limit," he said. Now he told about how the girl became abusive and called him things.

"What?" Lordy said.

"Names," Stoney said. He seemed thoughtful, grave. "Finally, I had enough of it, I tried to put her out—she slapped me." He looked down, hangdog. "And I guess I shouldn'ta done it, but I slapped her." And looking at the girl, "Maybe that's what started her," he said.

You dirty, filthy liar, she wanted to say . . . and Joe, leaning forward, felt himself in a shake, he almost wanted to get up there, put his hands on him again——

"Now is there anything else," Lordy said, "you would want to say?"

Stoney thought. "No," he said, "nothing. Nothing at all."

It was now Bennie's chance to have at Stoney Pike. It was a chance he accepted with considerable reluctance. Everything he knew to be true of Stoney had been borne out to-day. The man was shrewd, he was smart, he was a great personality.

How to break him down? Bennie had something, a weapon, a weapon he was reluctant to use, for it was his last weapon. Well, here goes——

"Squire," said Bennie, "I would like to put something to you. One party comes here and tells one story, another party tells another story."

The Squire just looked at him. "Somebody lied," Bennie said.

The Squire, his eyes cold, shrugged, seemingly willing to concede it.

"Now," said Bennie, "in the light of all your legal experience, do you think this girl would come here and perjure herself—and this young man maybe give up seven years of his life, just to circulate a false story? And see all this stuff about them in the papers?"

Lordy objected, but the question was allowed.

The Squire looked at Bennie, a cold, grey bitterness in his eyes. "I don't know," he said.

Bennie decided to use his weapon. "Now, Squire," he said, "is it true you had this girl fired from the department store?"

Something in Stoney staggered. Caught, he was thinking. Caught like a rat in a trap. He would like to deny it, his whole impulse was to deny. But, he thought, if Bennie had got hold of that, he could probably prove it. Mr. Joe Slater, the department-store man, had phoned him last night. But having other things on his mind, he had told Mace to say he was not in.

"Well, come on," Bennie said.

"I'm trying to remember," said Stoney.

"Well, I have something here," Bennie said, "that will refresh your memory." And out of his pocket he took a letter from the management of the Pittsburgh Store, to whom he had gone and told the whole thing. The management said it had looked into the matter, Mr. Joe Slater had said he had been "pressured" by the Squire to fire Stella Witowski, and at the instigation of the Squire had done so. Mr. Joe Slater had been summarily fired, the store deeply regretted the incident . . . Bennie held the letter under the Squire's nose. The Squire hated to read it.

And now Bennie was reading the letter to the jury. Lordy interjected, looking the letter over, saying, "This is the first I hear about a department store."

"This is the first you hear about a lot of things," Bennie said, and asked that the letter be put in evidence as Exhibit D.

For all that Stoney was shaken, he stared at Bennie with a deep, grieving, unforgiving hate. "Now," said Bennie, approaching him, looking into his bleary and hating eyes, "you did have this girl fired from the department store?"

Stoney nodded.

"Why?"

"Because she was pestering me."

"Do you," said Bennie, "have everybody fired that pesters you?" And he went into the matter of all the people that went to the Squire for help.

"Now," said Bennie, "you had her fired right after she said no to you."

"That's a lie!" It was out, almost before Stoney knew.

"Well, I don't know," Bennie said, "there may be perjury here; we'll see. But, anyway, that's what she says. You propositioned

her, she says, she said no—then she got fired from the department store. And these store records” (taking them from his pocket) “prove she is right as to dates.” He flapped them around, now handing them to the clerk, “Move they be put in evidence and marked Exhibit E.”

“Just a minute.” This from Lordy, examining the records. He didn’t know what to do, he hated being caught this way, yet he knew one thing: when in doubt, cast doubt. “What does he do,” he said, “fire her father from a mill, fire the girl from a department store, is that what the defence claims?”

“Now you got it,” said Bennie. “That’s exactly what the defence claims.”

Lordy threw up his hands as if all this were ridiculous. “Maybe he hires and fires all the people in Pittsburgh,” said he.

Bennie looked at him. “Maybe more than you think,” said he.

The judge called them to order. The jury looked from Bennie and Lordy to Stoney. The judge ruled there had better not be much discussion of the department store until someone testified to what happened there. Nevertheless, on the basis of the records and Stoney’s admission, Bennie could proceed to a certain point. “Now, Squire,” he said, “if you have enough power to get her fired from the department store, why haven’t you enough power to get her father——”

“Object, object,” Lordy cried, but Bennie finished—“to get her father fired from the mill?”

The question was never answered, it was lost in a maze of legal to-and-fro between the two attorneys, Judge Farjeon cautioning both.

“Now, Squire, you admit you had her fired from the department store?”

“I shouldn’ta done it,” Stoney said.

“Very good,” said Bennie, “you shouldn’ta done it. How did you do it?”

Stoney felt this was very unfair, the letter had established this, but he had to answer. “I knew a man there.”

“And,” said Bennie, “you already told us you knew a man, many men, at the mill.”

Stoney didn’t answer, Lordy objected, Bennie went on. “How do you account for the fact,” Bennie insisted, “that right after you had what you wanted of her——”

"Object, object," shouted Lordy. My God, he thought, that was clever, Bennie almost had him there.

"Right after," Bennie rephrased, "she says you had what you wanted, right after that her father goes back to work in the mill?"

"I don't know," said Stoney.

He saw Mrs. Bushkill looking at him, and her eyes were cold and grey as stone. He knew them, those lousy, sonofabitch, old-time Americanos, when they got set against you, they got dead set. Or maybe it was just the eye, the goddam hillbilly eye.

Christ, that he should suffer so. For one lay, one lousy psychopathic lay. And why didn't that Irish Catholic sonofabitch District Attorney save him?

"Come on, come on," shouted Bennie, "give me one possible explanation of how these people get hired and fired, go back to work or are kept from work just to suit your convenience."

"I'll tell you!" It was Joe. He had risen, his agitation so great he hardly knew he stood there, and pointing at Stoney, "You stole the inventions for the mill," he shouted, "and ever since they do favours for you."

Judge Farjeon was rapping his gavel. Joe in his Marine uniform was standing there shaking before Stoney, his eyes wild, about to pounce on him. Judge Farjeon, rapping his gavel, shaking his finger at the Marine, "I'll hold you in contempt," he said.

And Bennie, throwing it all to the winds, if Joe was in contempt he was willing to be in contempt, "Your Honour," he shouted, "I demand a subpoena of the books of Three Mile Mill. They will show this young lady's father fired just when he" (pointing to the Squire) "wanted him fired."

"That'll do," Judge Farjeon said. "We will have no outbursts." And his cold, subdued manner calmed the court. He said he would take the subpoena of the books of the mill under advisement. Court was adjourned for the day.

And Ned Woolbine wrote the story, other reporters wrote the story, for this was too good to miss. SAYS SQUIRE HAD MEN FIRED TO GET THEIR WOMEN was one subhead. INVENTIONS BASIS OF SQUIRE'S POWER said another; all this, to be sure, in terms skirting libel, such as, "Marine says . . . attributed to Marine." And the Marine, standing there with his wounds and his malarial shake, as Woolbine put it, about to put his hands on the Squire. MARINE IN CONTEMPT, and the fine he had to pay.

And people read the story, Joe saw. On the street-cars they read it, going out to the Island where they built ships. Going to work in the night and coming from work in the night they read it, these people in their work-stiff, sweat-stiff clothes, their grimy, blunted faces and bleary bloodshot eyes looking at the drawings the staff artist had made, the boy, the girl, the Squire, the judge. With blinking eyes, they beheld the story, with blunted, work-stupefied awareness. And the story seemed to become, for a moment, a core of consciousness. These people had sons and daughters in the war, they gave the blood and bought the bonds and built the ships . . . and here was this goddamned thing. And one shipbuilder, nudging the other, his grimy, misshapen finger pointing to the story, "What do you think of that?"

And the other shipbuilder, "Where there's smoke, there's usually fire."

And in Burchard's saloon, Burchard's being a joint where Service men hung out, the Service men leaned over the bar and looked at the story. None of them recognized Joe as he stood over his beer, seeing one of them point the story out to the other and say, "How do you like that? Guy leaves his girl and this Squire——"

"Yeah," said one of the men, "them Squires get plenty."

And a sailor, looking over the story, seeing the drawings and reading the few words about how the Marine had stood up in court, accusing the Squire—"What the hell does he want?" he said.

Joe smiled and went out, he loved these guys, it made no difference whether they saw it his way or not. But he saw now the value of "trying the case in the papers," as Bennie and Woolbine put it. He saw that elements of the case flickered and flamed in the city, in men's minds, in the city ringed by flame.

CHAPTER VI

A JUDGE IS JUDGED

"WHAT MAKES HIM make such allowances?"

The speaker was Eugene Osmond, of Three Mile Mill, Osmond Aeronautical, Osmond International, and various related enterprises.

The man he was talking about was Judge Farjeon. The man he was talking to was Judge Fretz, his relative and friend, known in Pittsburgh as "the Judge." When anyone in Pittsburgh referred to one judge above all other judges, he was referring to Judge Fretz, "the Judge."

The Judge was an elderly man with a deeply lined, reddish, blunt-nosed Germanic face. He had a silvery moustache, blue denim eyes. And silvery hair which stood, for its first inch, in Germanic fashion, then fell sharply about his long, thin, reddish face.

The Judge, to Eugene Osmond, was much more than a judge, a relative. (They had married sisters.) But Eugene Osmond's interest in him was something apart from their old knowing each other, the tragedies in their families, their business ventures and dreamings. The Judge was his chamberlain. Not officially, of course; officially he was a judge, by day he sat on a bench in the criminal courts. But by night, the Judge was Eugene Osmond's chamberlain. Not merely chamberlain to him, but to the Osmond Enterprises. The Judge was a profound legal brain. He had advised Eugene Osmond in every step, from the seizure of the inventions to Osmond's participation in the war. This was a strange participation, for at one time Eugene Osmond had deliberately armoured Germany and Japan. Then he had frantically rushed into being, in his own mind, one of the chief armourers to the United States.

But the past being past, as Eugene Osmond often said, and man being a creature for all matters, great and small, they were now about to cast themselves upon the stage of this case, the case strangely named the People *v.* Joe Drew, the case which Joe Drew had somehow turned into Joe Drew *v.* the Squire and the Mill. In truth, the Judge was but gingerly upon the stage, feeling dragged there by Eugene.

Eugene Osmond was a roly-poly. He had a big round head, surmounted by a tow-headed lump which curled on his forehead, this lump still blondish, but edged with grey. His eyes were shrewd, far-seeing, and sandy. For all their pleasantness, their centres at times would seem like bronze sequins, little metal discs, unfathomable, unrevealing. He looked, in a way, a little like Andrew Carnegie, whom he had known in his youth. But for all his splendour, there was something pathetic about his physical

structure. For God had seen fit to set his imposing head and shoulders on shortish, clumpy, runtish legs. These legs now propelled him back and forth through the shadows of his library, his eyes under his massive roundish forehead staring at the Judge. "Judge," he said, "what gets into that man?"

It was just like him, the Judge thought. Just like him to be accusing, still to be going on about Farjeon.

Rather wearily the Judge said, "I don't know."

Osmond nodded as if to say: Of course you don't know, you never know, you fine legal brains just haggle and shift. And, turning his back upon the Judge, he thought about the old inventor whom he had known and admired. And from whom he hadn't stolen anything—that is not exactly, and what are these moralities, anyhow? He thought about the boy, the Marine, strangely enough the friend of his own son Ron. Ronnie, beautiful and dead, in the South Pacific. Ronnie had written about him: "Pop" (that incurable humour of Ron's), "Pop, why did you have to steal his father's stuff?" If only the boy, the Marine, had come to him. He wanted to talk to him about Ronnie, Ronnie's last days. And he would have made some settlement with him. Now he had to go after him. His way of going after him was going after Judge Farjeon.

Great Jehoshaphat (Mr. Osmond didn't swear), this was the middle of a war. He couldn't have stuff like old inventions, patents, hauled out now, held up to public gaze, when his stuff was beginning to dominate the sky. "Tarnation," he said, "that I should have to bother with this." And now, facing the Judge, "That man ought to be impeached."

"It takes time, Eugene."

"Rot," he said. "Do it fast."

The Judge sighed. "It's impossible, Eugene."

"Nothing's impossible!"

The Judge nodded, he knew, this was Eugene. "There's no precedent."

"Make one," said Eugene. He had come to use the simplest language, to him the language of authority, aristocracy. "Now listen," he said, "you can get rid of anybody. Now do it."

The Judge thought. All his life he had preached Order. He used phrases like "an Ordered world, the Ordered way." These things he did not preach publicly, but rather at his club to a select

coterie, often to those judges he regarded as sensible, respectable entities.

The issue in the Judge's mind with regard to Farjeon was clear. Farjeon, whatever else he was (and the Judge could well have wished to come of such family and background), nonetheless was a maverick. Farjeon was out of order. Possibly through some nice, humane, Sunday impulses, but out of order.

The trial, as the Judge saw it, had been quite disorderly. He saw the little licking flames of the trial, what with this newspaper tinder, rising toward the flames of the mill. And to think of it, suppose some claim for damages were established, on the basis of the old inventions? Well, really, it was too formidable even to think of. He and Eugene had given their lives to the mill, to all that had risen from it. And all that could be swept away. Not likely, but it could. The possibility now stood on the horizon. Ah, horizon of life, eternally rimmed with chaos, possibility.

Indeed, what could be done to get Farjeon out? But there was no way.

And then, lo and behold, such a way appeared. It was related to an incident, a personality of the trial.

At the moment the Marine had stood there, standing over Stoney Pike, shaking, shouting his vehement accusation, one man above all men at the trial stood looking on, looking on with a feeling of special knowledge, information. This was the old tipstaff, Titus "Admiration" Jones.

Jones, as has been indicated, was a man who lived for punishments. He was too old now, though hale and hearty, to care much for eat and drink and girls. Nor did his strange pale life in the courts satisfy him. Nor the punishment lust. If the truth be known, the punishment lust was a substitution.

For Titus Jones was a deeply disappointed man. Like most disappointed men, his deepest disappointment was in himself. For Titus, despite his lackadaisical life in the courts, was a man of dreams, visions, a secret ambition.

His ambition was to be somebody, to be looked up to, to be a judge—not, as he sometimes said, "to be a goddam tipstaff all my life." In fact, once long ago, he had started on the trail, studying law in night school. But a sickly wife having eaten up his time and money, he had put the books away, given up all hope of some formal entry into the law, the courts.

But with this case there came an awakening of the old dream, a flaming of the old spark. For was he not in possession of some secret information, had he not come upon the judge and the lawyer discussing the case before it went to trial—and was this not a prize package, a bombshell?

Only, as Titus watched the case, he didn't know. He didn't know of what value, at moments, his bombshell was.

But now, after days of listening to testimony, he knew. The main factor, the main victim, as it stood right now, was Stoney Pike, the Squire. Ah yes, he was cool and strong, respectable-looking even. But that deep breathing, the way he pressed the lips down, the hawky nose with the nostrils bulging for air, the badgered, battered grey eyes—it all gave him away. And what a beating Bennie had given him, and the Marine standing over him, shouting at him.

Stoney was in the position where a feller needs a friend. And a friend in need is a friend indeed. Doubtless Stoney would be glad to have a piece of information, pay for it maybe. He was a powerful man, Stoney was, for all he had been battered and made to look shabby to-day. But if he came out of this he might be powerful again. He could pay off in a political way, put a man down on the slate, for judgeship, or prothonotary, maybe. If not in this county, in some other counties, there were still counties in Pennsylvania where a man didn't have to be a lawyer to be a judge.

Titus saw his chance.

He was going to be a judge! Up to now it had been a dream. But now, with a little luck, he could make it a reality.

And why not? he said to himself. Why shouldn't Titus Jones be a judge? His Honour Titus Jones. And no more Admiration cigars. All for one little thing, one little piece of information, a bombshell.

Yet Titus was not without compunction in all of this. He realized, as he had listened to the evidence, that the boy and girl were innocent, and that the Squire was guilty. He would be hurting the innocent and helping the guilty. Still, that couldn't be helped. If you played with the big people you became big.

Therefore, he had to play with the big people, help Stoney. At the same time, at the same time . . . there was a sigh in Titus, he didn't altogether like it. He had been brought up in a "decent,

moral, religious background" as he sometimes called it, and it seemed wrong to him. At this moment Titus had a vision: a dusty road in Jerusalem . . . the Figure on the Cross . . . thirty pieces of silver dropping into a palm.

Still, what could you do? If he got to be judge, a power, maybe he would catch up with Stoney some day, give him a good, stiff sentence.

But he couldn't think of things like that. Court was breaking up, the bluish shadows of oncoming night casting themselves into the courtroom, almost pushing all else out. For once the boy and his lawyer, with the attitude of victory, went out first. Stoney, like an old corrupt king, almost lingered on the stand, then slowly rejoined his followers. How silent they were, they who had been so jubilant before. Titus saw the Squire, with repressed deep breathing, trying to gather strength, courage, to face the world, go down the hall.

Titus went on ahead, into the corridor, waited until the Squire should come along. And here he was, at the head of his troupe, hawk-faced but firm.

"Squire," Titus said, "Squire Pike, I'd like to see you, talk to you, something important."

Stoney had a natural suspiciousness, heightened now by his precarious position. But the fellah seemed all right, he had seen him around. Stoney nodded to his henchmen, waved them along. Then he stepped, with the tipstaff, to the side of the shadowy corridor.

"Squire," Titus said, his blue eyes gleaming and appealing, "would you remember a man who did you a good turn?" And now Titus told him about himself, he was a tipstaff, but he had told judges the law. "You can ask people," he said.

Surprised as he was, and suspicious, Stoney was a little pleased. It was nice to have someone want to talk to him, treat him as if he were still a big man. Obviously the tipstaff wanted something, was trying to ingratiate himself.

Now Titus came out with it—he had seen, he had heard Bennie consulting with Judge Farjeon.

"Before the trial?" said Stoney.

"Before the trial," said Titus.

"You sure?" said Stoney.

"I'm sure," said Titus.

Stoney looked into those blue eyes. Saved, he was saying to himself, saved! He still had to tread a lot of water, but he saw land. He saw land in Titus's blue eyes.

And now, feeling his strength, his courage, his authoritative personality coming back to him, as if someone had thrown a switch in the universe, filling him with heat, warmth, electricity, the current of life—"Titus," he said, "you come with me."

He strode to a telephone booth, called Mr. Hilder, Mr. Richard Hilder, of "the Organization." Then he called Judge Handley, the president judge.

The upshot of this being that within the hour, Stoney, accompanied by his witness, the tipstaff Titus Jones, was in Judge Handley's drawing-room, Titus telling his story to Judge Handley and Mr. Hilder. And when he had finished—

"That's collusion," Stoney said. "I don't stand for it." And about Judge Farjeon, "That man must go."

Mr. Hilder and Judge Handley looked at him. He still had political stature, but his stature was smaller, muddled up. But he might come out of it, again be a big man.

Mr. Hilder and Judge Handley looked at each other. They were both thinking the same thing:

Stoney Pike: 16,000 votes.

Judge Farjeon: nuisance.

Mr. Hilder, a little man with small dark eyes in a dark, woody face, said, "I guess you better do something."

Judge Handley said, "I guess I better had." He had a thought. He said, "Excuse me, gentlemen," went to his den.

What Judge Handley wanted was advice. But he wanted it from the right source, from the dean of the courts, the Preacher of Order. He called the Judge. Upon being told the Judge was not at home, he got him at Eugene Osmond's.

So it was that the Judge, hearing the story from Handley, clapped his hand over the phone, looked at Eugene and said, "We've got them, Eugene."

Then he told Handley what to do. "Handy," he said, "call counsel. Have one or two judges sit with you, share responsibility. Handy," he said, "suppose Judge Farjeon died to-night?" He let it sink in. "And Handy, act quickly, expeditiously, to-night. No lingering maladies, Handy. Be surgical." The Judge had another thought. "I'll be home if you want me. Call me, consult."

Judge Handley felt that the spirit of the Judge had entered his spirit. But that was not all. There had been an error, possibly a deliberate breach on the part of a well-known judge and attorney. He had to do something about it.

Judge Handley was well aware of his obligation. He returned to Mr. Hilder, suggested procedure. They would call two other judges. As for the judges, Handley, himself a Republican, suggested Crain, a Democrat. And for a third judge, they thought of the rather learned, brooding mystic, Brutus Quine.

These judges were summoned; at the same time, with much telephoning, a summons going out to Bennie and Judge Farjeon. It was thought to call Lordy O'Leary, but Judge Handley prevailed, saying, "Let's not have too many." It was agreed to call Lordy, but tell him to wait, to hold himself in readiness.

Mr. Hilder nodded. His part in the matter being over, he said, "I'll take my leave." As he left he looked at Handley with his dark little eyes, delegating authority.

The judges arrived, were confronted by Stoney and Titus Jones.

Judge Handley was the presiding intelligence. With his bald head, bald face, upswopping nose and clear blue eyes he looked like a smart, wholesale grocer, the kind that starts chains. He sat flanked by the other judges, Crain on his left, Judge Quine on his right.

Titus told his story.

Then Bennie and Judge Farjeon were shown in by a servant.

Nobody in the room, except Stoney, had any idea that Bennie had known of the event. He had known about it through a curious circumstance. Stoney had told him. On his way to Handley's, Stoney had a vengeful idea. The bastard, why not make him fry? He called him. "Fry, you Jew bastard," he said. "You've been caught in collusion." He hung up.

Bennie fried. This could mean only one thing. The tipstaff, who had looked at him so queerly recently. He thought to tell Judge Farjeon, but he didn't even know if it was true. He got hold of Joe, saying, "You better stay by me." He didn't know what he wanted him for, except at any moment he might have to tell him to get another attorney.

"You don't think it's serious?" Joe said.

The hard brown eyes just looked at him. "They could disbar me."

Then the summons came from Handley, there could be no doubt now, Bennie called Judge Farjeon. "I don't think we better discuss this," Judge Farjeon said.

Bennie nodded to Joe, they got into the car, drove to Handley's. "Stay in the car," Bennie said. And trying to summon all his aplomb, he went in. He managed to seem pleasant, say "Judge . . . Judge . . . Judge." Like a goddam automaton, he said to himself.

The Squire was staring at him.

He was asked to tell his story. He told how he had gone to Judge Farjeon. Judge Farjeon was a particularly humane man, this was an exceptional case. "Frankly," he said, "I wanted Judge Farjeon to try it."

Judge Farjeon corroborated. Lawyer Jordan had come to him, he himself had reminded Lawyer Jordan it would have been better had he brought someone from the District Attorney's office. "I took it as an oversight," Judge Farjeon said, "I still think it was." He told about the tipstaff having gone in and out of the room. (The eyes of the judges signalled: it was true then.) "I was interested in the case," Judge Farjeon said, "I wanted to try it." He looked at Judge Handley. "That's why I made application to you. You remember."

Judge Handley nodded.

Stoney, looking down from his great, embittered, stooped, hawkish height, with a sweep of his hand from Bennie to Judge Farjeon, "That's a collusive breach, a judicial miscarriage," he said.

Judge Farjeon merely looked at him with contempt. Judge Handley gave him a sharp-eyed stare 'as if to say: we'll make up our minds as to that. He put a word into Judge Crain's ear, Crain nodded. A word into Judge Quine's ear. Quine nodded.

Stoney was asked to go. The tipstaff was asked to go. They left. Judge Farjeon was asked to wait in an adjoining room.

Handley looked at Bennie. "Mr. Jordan," he said, "could you leave and come back in an hour or two?"

Bennie nodded. He left the house. He could see the stooped figure of the Squire, the square shoulders of Titus down the street. He went to the car.

"Well?" said Joe.

Bennie got in, said nothing. Then—"I don't think they're after me," he said. "It's Farjeon."

Parked as they were on a little hillock, they could look down the lawn to the house. They saw Farjeon seated in one room, the judges in another.

Christ, thought Joe, Farjeon sitting alone.

"Come on," said Bennie, "let's get out of here, drive around. I have to be back."

Bennie had been right in one thing. The judges weren't after him, primarily. It was Farjeon. And Handley, in his sharp, astute way, faced it. He looked at small, crabbed, cold-eyed Crain, at the strong, pale, muscular face of Brutus Quine, his yellowish eyes dreaming some self-involvement.

"Gentlemen," he said, "what do we want?" And his sharp, wholesale-grocer eyes fixed on them. It was plain they didn't know, therefore he told them.

"We want the case in good hands, and no political kickback."

They nodded, they understood.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "this is a strange case. I don't know any more about it than I've read in the papers. But," he said, "this case has already touched the vista of the mill. Now, gentlemen," he said, "this is not a case against the mill. I wouldn't mind if it were, but it isn't." He saw the mill, the flames of its furnaces, the E flags over all. "Gentlemen, there's a war on. This is no time to"—he looked at them, his clear blue eyes carrying out his meaning: this was no time to rock the boat.

They looked at him, getting it.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "we do not want, if we can help it, a public impeachment. That would only pour kerosene on the flames. What we want, gentlemen, is to be able to handle this, quickly, effectively, to-night."

The cold eyes of Crain looked at him as if to say: how can you do that?

"I have a formula, gentlemen. It may seem strange, but—I think we have a certain responsibility to our times, conditions. Even the Supreme Court has so held." Now Handley came out with it. "Gentlemen, I present you with the hypothesis: Suppose Judge Farjeon died to-night?"

The eyes of Crain gleamed coldly upon him, as if saying: But he isn't dead.

Brutus Quine, with raised eyes, thought he could see what was wanted. "Sick," he said, "a sudden stroke." Yet as he said this he did not give consent. He had been handed a problem, here was the solution.

Handley nodded. "Yes, gentlemen, a sudden stroke, to-night."

"You can't place a man twice in jeopardy," said Crain, referring to the man on trial.

"No," said Handley, "but if Judge Farjeon were ill, had to go away, perhaps someone else could sit in his place. And the trial could go on."

Crain frowned. It was most unusual. But just to see what was in the wind, "And then?"

"Then," said Handley, "we could have a man of such eminence, such wide experience, not merely a judge, gentlemen, but a jurist"—all looked at each other. There could be no doubt as to the person in question. This could be none other than Judge Fretz.

"Have you spoken to him?" said Crain.

"No," said Handley, "but I will." He went to the phone. Judge Fretz approved, so far. "But," he said, "have you gotten rid of Farjeon?"

"That," said Handley, "is the next step."

Bennie and Joe were driving around Pittsburgh. "Come on," said Joe, "let's go back."

"What for?" said Bennie. "We've got time." But he too was intrigued by Joe's idea, drove back, parked on the little hillock at the side of the house, looked down.

They saw Judge Farjeon standing before the three judges.

"What is this?" Joe said.

"I don't know, maybe they're trying him," Bennie said.

"Is it legal?"

Bennie shrugged. He couldn't answer. It was like asking: was the war legal?

Joe looked at Farjeon, walking up and down, facing his judges. He thought of Ron. He thought of something else: the good are dead . . . was Farjeon going to be a dead pigeon?

It was too bad. Farjeon was a good guy. He felt now, seeing

Farjeon adjust his glasses and face his judges, that something in himself was being represented by Farjeon, that the heat was on the judge because he had allowed him to say certain things. He felt something else, that if Farjeon lost, the whole thing was lost. All the work, the worry, getting Stell on the stand, that she had revealed herself, naked, before the city—Christ!

He saw Farjeon, hands on his hips, looking at one judge, then another. He saw him saying something, almost demanding something.

And looking at his judges, Waldo Farjeon spoke. "Is this a trial?" he said.

"No, this is not a trial," Judge Handley said.

Judge Farjeon, his watery blue eyes blinking, "What is it?"

Judge Handley had to reach for something. "This is a *presidium preventatorum*."

Judge Farjeon got it. "Preventing what?"

Again Handley had to reach. "Upset."

Judge Farjeon understood, they were protecting something, the mill.

"Now listen, Waldo," Handley said, "here's the proposition. There has been a judicial breach." He looked at Farjeon. "Personally, Waldo, I believe you. But," he said, "this thing has come to us and we must do something about it."

"Not at all," said Farjeon. "You've looked into it. You can say everything is all right."

Handley looked at him, shook his head. That was not what they were here for. "Now look, Waldo," he said, "I'll advance something to you. You go home," he said, "call me. You tell me you've had a sudden stroke. Better still, you get on a plane, Waldo, fly to the Mayo Brothers, to-night."

Farjeon looked at him. So that was the plot. "Don't you know," he said, "you can't put a man twice in jeopardy?" It was weak, of course, they knew.

"He won't be twice in jeopardy," Handley said, "you leave that to us."

The Marine, thought Farjeon, the Marine. He looked at Handley, and very quietly, "You've got it all figured out, haven't you?"

Handley looked back at him, his eyes saying: perhaps we have.

"Look here," said Farjeon, "I'm a judge, a judge doesn't just leave a case, you know."

Handley, "I would if I were you."

"And if I don't?" Judge Farjeon said.

"Well," said Handley, "if you don't, charges will be preferred against you." He looked Farjeon in the eye. "Not on this case" (how clever, Farjeon thought, he could see what was coming) "but on previous cases," Handley said. "Laxity, conduct unbecoming a judge." Handley looked at him. "You'll be impeached, Waldo," he said.

One thing became plain to Waldo Farjeon. They had all this fixed. His thought related to what he had said a little while ago, "Is this a trial?" And they had told him the truth, this was not a trial. This was a court-martial, a hanging jury, a drumhead, like armies on the march, with votes cast on top of a drum. They had condemned him before he had arrived.

He went up and down, he need be in no hurry, he thought. Why should the condemned be in a hurry? The business of the judges was . . . their business. His business was thought, its relationship to human life, certain ultimates. He would have these moments of thought.

He couldn't help but think of something. The meanest criminal, the most common thief, was to be judged by a jury of his peers. By twelve good men and true. In what way were these men his peers? He who had sat with the Spirit hovering over him, saying: go and sin no more. He who was willing to seek justice, not in fragmentation, but in the totality of human life . . . if he said this, would they know what he meant, and would it matter if they did? For their sin was not what they didn't know, but what they felt compelled to do.

Good heavens, what a triumph for Stoney Pike, for his ilk, and for whoever else might be involved. Well, there was something he could do, he could fight.

The judge put his hand on his back, his hand faintly massaging near his bad spine. He looked out of his face of pain. He looked at Handley. Handley was too adept, determined, too pushing, too hard. To Handley there could be no appeal.

But Crain was another proposition. Crain was a former mechanic, a night law-school student. He had been, in the early days of the New Deal, quite a New Dealer, "Is this chaos, this

hunger, this depression, is this Order?" he had cried. There was another thing about Crain. The machine-shop grime was still there, a nest of little blackheads at the corner of his eye. Of course, his skin was scrubbed and clean, but the blackheads were still there from the machine-shop grime. He would appeal to Crain.

And looking into the cold, faintly gleaming eye of Homer Crain, "Homer, you're not going to do this to me, are you?" Farjeon said. "You know I'm a pretty good judge, Homer. Are you going to make me quit this case or impeach me?"

Homer Crain looked down. He hadn't liked much about all this, it was a put-up job. And he didn't like Mr. Hilder, the Organization and Stoney Pike. Most of all he didn't like Three Mile Mill. He had worked there once, as a grinder. He was reminded too of his early days of the New Deal, and how the New Deal had swept him in because the people were sick of the other thing. And he remembered his own ranting about Order, he remembered his platform speeches, in which he had shouted, "I myself worked with my hands" (holding them up). He remembered how he had quoted Abraham Lincoln on the effrontery of capital, to put itself on the same basis as labour. He had perspired and steamed in all kinds of halls in Pittsburgh, in Slovak Hall and Mechanics Hall, telling people about Danton and Robespierre, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. His soul made an obeisance to the rebels of the past.

But now, in truth, he felt afraid. He did not know what he was afraid of, he felt some kind of inner chill. And indeed there had been some kind of a breach here. And raising his eyes with their cold crabbed gleam, "Waldo," he said, "I don't know but what the judges here, mebbe they're trying to be fair. They've got things to contend with," he said, "and after all, they don't want to impeach you." He shook his small head. "They only want, Waldo, for you to go away. This case will be in good hands. And then you can come back, not long from now. And," he added, "with no harm done."

Judge Farjeon frowned. He had one last chance, the brooding mystic, Brutus Quine. But as he turned to him, Quine raised his yellowish eyes. "It's no use, Waldo," he said.

DRANG . . . like the final notes of a gruesome symphony, Waldo Farjeon felt the thing come to its end. He was finished,

cooked. Either he could continue this trial or stand for impeachment.

His thoughts took him back to why he stayed on the bench. It wasn't to help some specific shoplifter, but for the general good he could do.

But the Marine, he said to himself, the Marine.

Well, he was only *E Pluribus Unum*, one out of many, he would have to sacrifice him for the day he would come back, for the general good he could do.

And now there was no use dragging it out. "All right, gentlemen," he said, "I submit." This was Munich, the Eternal Munich, it was bad, but what could he do? "I shall go home," he said to Handley, "I shall call you. I shall have a hell of a stroke, I shall go to the Mayo Brothers and see if they can find out what's wrong with me."

And he went out.

And so it was that Bennie and Joe saw Judge Farjeon go, and Lordy O'Leary arrive. Bennie said, "I think this is me, I guess I'd better go in."

And leaning over the wheel, turning sideways, Bennie looked at him. "Now listen, kid, do you want another lawyer?"

Joe said, "Why?"

"I don't know," Bennie said, "but you'd just better tell me. I have to go in there and know all the answers."

"Don't be a chump," said Joe. He felt it was impossible. Bennie had already done so much, brought out so much, he would feel strange, foolish, disconnected, with another lawyer. He just shook his head, put his hand on Bennie's shoulder, both confirming his belief in him and sending him along.

Judge Handley made a statement to Bennie and Lordy: Judge Farjeon had been taken ill, he could not continue, they had just phoned Judge Fretz, fortunately he had agreed to go on with the case. (At the "fortunately" Bennie felt an ice-pick over his heart.) Handley went on: Judge Fretz had asked for transcripts of evidence, they would be furnished him, the Judge would read tonight (Bennie saw him, gritty old customer that he was, reading through the night). "He'll be in court to-morrow, the trial will go on," Judge Handley said. He looked at Lordy and Bennie, "If this is agreeable to you."

Well, thought Lordy, why shouldn't it be agreeable to him? As for Bennie: They got me with my pants down, he said to himself. And smiling, as he had often smiled in the ring when accepting a bum decision, he nodded.

Court in the morning presented a strange spectacle. Titus brought the jury in. Then he said the prothonotary, the chief clerk of the court, had something to say to them.

The prothonotary was an old man, tall, spare, with something distinguished and slightly threadbare about him. He adjusted his glasses, and peering at the jury over his half-lenses, "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury," he said, "in all my years as prothonotary, which have indeed been a good many, it has never been my lot to do anything like I have to do to-day."

And he told them, as the city knew from the morning papers, Judge Farjeon was taken ill in the night, and was now on his way to the Mayo Brothers at Rochester, Minnesota. "We wish him Godspeed," he said.

The members of the jury looked at each other . . . the prothonotary went on to explain the seriousness of the situation. For one thing, you couldn't put a man in double jeopardy. For another, the long absence of a judge from his court was frowned upon by the law.

"To meet this situation," he said, "the president judge sought the counsel of other judges." And he told how the judges in their wisdom had decided another judge could carry on. The prosecution and the defence having agreed, it was found Judge Fretz could take the case. "All night," the prothonotary said severely, looking at the jury over his half-lenses, "Judge Fretz has been reading the evidence to familiarize himself with the case. Therefore there need be no interruption, the trial will go right on."

With that the prothonotary concluded his remarks. The court crier took over, crying out in a lusty tone, "All rise!"

All rose, and Judge Fretz walked in. He wore his black robe. In his hand was a sheaf of papers, transcripts of the evidence, no doubt. He stood there, his silvery hair about his red, apoplectic face, something soldierly in his manner. He cast his blue denim eyes over the court. He seemed to be saying: This company has been very disorderly indeed, we will now come to order. The

court functionaries too stood stiffly, like sergeants glad of a proper officer. The Judge nodded, the people could sit down.

He sat now, the transcript sheets before him. It was a while before he spoke. "I see," he said, "there has been a request for a subpoena of the books of Three Mile Mill. Is counsel for the defence ready to proceed?"

Bennie wasn't ready. But, he thought, he better be. It was the Judge all over, punching back, starting with the most delicate thing . . . he began to argue the subpoena, Lordy interrupting and making it an involved legal matter. But this, Bennie could see, was just what the Judge wanted. It being Saturday, and a short day, the Judge was stalling, getting his bearings.

Now he adjourned. And with more formality than Farjeon ever adjourned. And as he had them all there, on their feet, the Judge turned to the jury, and in a very courtly way, "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury," said he, "though I have read the evidence, I shall read it again, over the week-end." And he smiled at them, as if to say: You see, I must do my home work too.

Now he stood, tall, handsome, distinguished, his reddish face looking up at the high window, then slowly he passed from the court.

He had not looked at Bennie or Lordy. Or at Titus or Stoney. Or at the Marine and the girl. But he had done one thing, Joe felt, he had left the indelible effect of his presence upon the court.

CHAPTER VII

THE JUDGE

THE MAN WHO WAS now to try the case occupied Bennie's mind. He did not know to what extent the Judge was behind Farjeon's being thrown out, but he could guess. And he realized the Judge wasn't up there, as he said to himself, "for nothing."

It was Saturday afternoon, in Bennie's office, Bennie behind his desk. He was moody and frowning. Joe, knowing he was worried about the Judge, said, "Is he that important?"

Bennie, for a moment, seemed impatient. "Certainly," he said, "he sums up. He can take everything we say, and twist it his

way." And he told him something about the Judge. Joe began to see that the Judge was the legal brain behind the seizure of his father's inventions. Naturally he would be hostile.

"Then we can't win," he said.

"I don't know," said Bennie. "Let's call Woolbine and see what he says."

Woolbine came over, and in his large, thoughtful eyes there was a spark of something. "Listen," he said, "I have an idea. It may not be much, but it's something."

And he began to talk to Bennie about Luthe, the Judge's son, once a lawyer. Luthe, Joe said to himself, Luthe. Why certainly, that was the cousin Ron had told him about on Guadalcanal, Luthe, son of the Judge.

Woolbine's idea was that Luthe should join Bennie as counsel, possibly make the plea to his father, the Judge. "I'm willing," Bennie said, "but will he do it?"

"I don't know," said Woolbine, "but we can ask."

Joe felt somewhat storm-tossed, his destiny being shunted this way and that. But if this was the way, it was the way. He said nothing. Woolbine called Luthe Fretz. Yes, Luthe would see them, they could come out.

"You better leave me out of this," Bennie said. He felt he had already meddled too much. "You two go along." He looked at Woolbine, but speaking about Joe, "Anything that helps the kid is all right with me."

Woolbine asked for the use of the car. Bennie nodded.

"There's no hurry," Woolbine said as they drove along. "Luthe won't be ready to see us for about an hour." And he began to speak about the Judge and his son. "They're very different in some ways," he said, "yet there's a curious similarity. Germanic stubbornness, perhaps."

And he began to tell about the Judge. The Judge was a miller's son, he had come from a small town in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, one of those small towns known by the name of its mill, Fretz's Mill. And though his people were pretty well off, and had sent him to college, they were not the sort of people the Judge wanted to mix with, to marry with.

Then the Judge met the Vignon sisters. "They came from a family," said Woolbine, "that was very well known long ago,

French people, who started a furnace upstate, way before the Revolutionary War." Joe nodded, his father had told him about the Vignon Furnace.

Now Woolbine told how the three sisters, two now dead, with their beauty and their money, their charm and position, had somehow aided and sacrificed themselves to the men they had married. One had married Eugene Osmond, one had married the Judge, one had married a man named MacTavish.

"At any rate," Woolbine said, "the most beautiful of them all, and the most talented was this Lorraine Vignon. She can write. But she doesn't do anything about it." And this, he implied, was because of the Judge.

"You see," he said, "the Judge has to be the important man." And he told about how the burgeoning talent of his wife was a thorn in the flesh of the Judge. "She made him, in a way," he said, "introduced him socially, she and her sister cemented his connection to Osmond. But after she started to write, and got published in the magazines, and did features for local papers, the Judge just couldn't bear it. He couldn't bear her growing prominence.

"It's a sin of many a man," Woolbine said, "but in the Judge's case it seemed particularly Germanic. He loved her," he said, "he still does, I guess. But he had to have her, body and soul. He had to be the boss-man. He had to be everything, she had to be nothing *Küchen, Kinder, und Kirche*."

And he told about how he had known her, years ago, this great lady, who could be seen about the newspaper rooms doing a feature, proposing some civic improvement. "Then I began to see less of her," he said, "but I know the story." And he told how though they loved each other, it became cats and dogs in the Judge's house. And finally the Judge just faced her, with her picture in the papers, her stories in magazines, she being proposed for Congresswoman. "I just can't stand it," the Judge said.

"It's strange about the Judge," Woolbine said; "he's got some basic honesty somewhere."

And he told how finally, because of her affection for him, because she hated to feel she was making him suffer, because she didn't want to raise a child in a house of dissension, she gave in. "Though she still writes secretly, furtively, like a crime," Woolbine said. "She tears it up."

Then he told how her giving in, like many a thing in life, had come too late. "Luthe had already seen too much dissension. Do you know what it is to raise a child in a house of dissension?" he said. Joe didn't know, not really, his house hadn't been that way. "I know," Woolbine said, "I was raised in one." And he frowned, brooding for the moment. "And who knows, maybe that had nothing to do with Luthe, but I think it had."

Then he told how Luthe, like many a child, couldn't help taking sides. "He sided with his mother," he said, "he's more like her. Looks like her too. And temperamentally, he has that same vivid, emotional, artistic French strain. To make a long story short, he wanted to be some kind of an artist, to make good his mother's flowering that the Judge had cut off.

"But," he said, "the Judge wouldn't stand for it. Cut Luthe off." Joe nodded, he knew, Ron had told him that. "The Judge hates art," Woolbine said, "he loves it as a possession, he admires it if it was done a hundred years ago. But right now, and particularly by somebody he knows, he hates it. Maybe it reminds him of his trouble with his wife." And he went on to say that nevertheless Luthe struggled, as a painter, as a poet; that he became a young man about town who introduced people to things, books, poetry, modern music.

Joe nodded, Luthe had introduced Ron to poetry. And their cousin, Sylvia.

"Well," said the newsman, "it's a tough row to hoe, and Luthe gave up. Not really in his heart. But just to live well again. And his father gave him plenty of money, if he would go to law school. He did, and he graduated, but his heart wasn't in it. He practised for a little while, corporation law, in his father's firm. Then the writing bug got him again."

And he told how again Luthe was cut off. Then his father promised him some money if he'd only take up his profession. "But Luthe was bored with law, he tried medicine. He's tried engineering too. He's tried poetry, music, painting, even a novel about his mother's sisters. I guess," Woolbine said, "you could call him a dilettante. Though at the same time, if he's willing to help you, there might be something to it."

The city rolls to the country. Then sharply the Pennsylvania hills rise like sentinels. That's enough city, the hills seem to say.

From now on, the hills seem to say, we'll have something else. We will be Nature, we will have "Nature's balm and brood"—it was a phrase Joe hadn't thought of in a long time, his father's phrase.

For somehow this sharp aspect of city and country reminded him of his father. And his father's inventions, contributing to the wealth of Mr. Osmond, the Judge, the Judge's son. The Judge's son, who could build himself a house like this. For Woolbine said that the Judge, long since tired of disinheriting him, now gave him all the money he wanted.

The house somehow expressed the dilettante. Built of wood, in a strange design, it seemed somehow in the exact spot where the city meets the country, one great front window looking out upon the city, the great back window of the living-room looking out upon the country. And the living-room, immense and two-storied, and somehow like a New York penthouse apartment. Joe had never seen such an apartment, except in the movies.

And all about, like little waves of culture, a slap-dash of magazines, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New Masses*, the *New Yorker*, the *Saturday Review of Literature*, as if here, every week, came the light of the world. It made Joe smile. Ron too had to have these magazines, even in the midst of a war.

An elderly housekeeper had admitted them. After a few minutes Luthe appeared from the balcony. He was very handsome, Joe thought, a dark Ron, with green eyes in his chiselled ivory face. He was wearing a dressing-gown over trousers and sport shirt.

And as if getting himself to be more brusque than was natural to him, "Well," he said.

Woolbine asked him if he had heard about the case. Yes, he had read it in the papers. Joe found those green eyes turning upon him with great interest. To Woolbine Luthe said, "What do you want?"

And Woolbine told him. Would he join counsel in this case, appear before the Judge?

"You don't want much, do you?" Luthe said. But he smiled, a sort of cynical, mocking smile. And then, looking from Joe to Woolbine, "Could I see the client alone?" He used the word "client" with deliberate mockery. "I'll get him back to town," he said.

Woolbine nodded, went on his way.

Once he was gone, Luthe seemed much more at ease. And with his eyes rather friendly, "I wanted to talk to you about Ron," he said. And he added, "He wrote about you."

Joe nodded.

"Did he tell you about me?"

Joe nodded.

"My professions? Sylvia?"

Joe knew this to be Sylvia MacTavish, cousin of both Ron and Luthe, as crazy about Ron as Luthe was about her. He looked into those green eyes, nodded, yes, he knew about these things.

"Well," said Luthe, "there isn't much about me you don't know." He smiled, a sort of beautiful smile, Joe thought, something foolish in it, something angelic. Luthe was serious now. "Tell me, was Ron a good soldier?"

"The best."

"Did Ron," said Luthe, "have faith?"

Joe thought. Yes, for all the beautiful cynicism, for all the fun he made of life, Ron had faith. He nodded.

Luthe looked at him. "In order to fight," he said, "does a man have to have faith?"

Joe thought. After what he had seen, there could be no doubt of it. "The god of battles," as Ron called it, was a god of faith. Not necessarily the Jewish faith, Protestant faith, Catholic faith. Sometimes the faith that you were right, your side. Sometimes the faith included George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Sometimes the girl you left behind you. Sometimes the land of ice-cream sodas, or that stack o' wheats in Childs. Sometimes your father and mother. In fact, he realized it now, the reason he was fighting the Squire, going through all this, was related to faith . . . he tried to get some of this over to Luthe.

"Tell me," said Luthe, "can a cynic fight?"

Joe thought. Not really, not a deep cynic. For a cynic in a way was a murderer. And he had found murderers couldn't fight. They could murder, like the Germans and the Japs. But they couldn't fight. You had to be a man, a fighting man, to fight. The thought took him back to Guadal, the earliest days, when they had to fight the Jap Imperial Marines. And, brother, were they big, not little yellow bastards, but the biggest Jap Imperials you ever did see. And the way the dirty, bloody, undermanned

U.S. Marines fought back, that was faith, and it set the murderers back. He tried to make Luthe see it.

Then Luthe asked him a question. "Ron," he said, "did he fight for Sylvia?"

"In a way."

Luthe looked at him. "And you?" he said.

Joe nodded.

"The girl in the case?"

Joe didn't like it, but he nodded. What he didn't like about it was that Luthe's pale green eyes seemed to be seeing her, her nakedness, the rape. He had always tried to keep stuff like that out of his mind. But now he had a deep unhappy consciousness of it, of Stoney's penetration of her—goddam!

What business was it of his about stuff like that? And why all these questions about Ron, about faith? Still, Joe saw, this was what the fellow wanted, this was his price. And he himself, being in the toils of the law, and hoping for something, had to pay the price.

And perhaps Luthe understood. With something not unsympathetic in his green eyes, "I'm interested in faith," he said, "perhaps because I haven't any." He got up, strolled about in his long gown. "I was in for a little while," he said. Joe knew he meant the Army. "Then I became thirty-eight. I would have stayed," he said. "Except that I felt I had nothing to fight for. You see"—his eyes were intense, personal, they made Joe remember that Ron had said Luthe would say anything—"you see," he said, "I've watched my father and my Uncle Eugene for too long. They're always cooking something. Ron saw it too, but somehow he managed to retain faith. I guess in people. Oh hell——"

He stopped abruptly, and with the intentness and suffering of his eyes, "Did you see Ron die?"

"He died in my arms," Joe said.

Luthe repressed a shudder. But now he seemed decided. "Come on," he said, "let's go to town. I'll see my father. Maybe there's something I can do. I'll let you know."

The Judge sat in his living-room. The mouse-grey walls of the living-room were a comfort to him. It was Saturday night. Almost every Saturday night he sat at home. He and Eugene had never

spoken of it, yet somehow this was the night each had unto his own. And as usual she, his beloved, was upstairs, scratching away with her pen, reminding him.

Then later she would throw it away. Good, as long as she didn't publish it. Yet strangely the Judge was forced to admit something to himself, she was less interesting this way. Well, and what of that? Were women meant to be interesting? Yes and no. Nevertheless, he had done for that in her which shamed him, abashed him, seemed to be on the way to being a greater light. Good. He remained, and the threat to him was snuffed out.

And so with much of life, other judges, lawyers, cases that seemed about to overwhelm him. Yet in a way he loved these things, as Eugene loved them, when they were beautiful, subdued, dead. What more beautiful than the dead pheasant in your hand?

The Judge faced it. He knew what he was. Out of his reading, his reading of the English, it came to him. He was the man who had killed the thing he loved.

Her talent, with its now ghostly scratching. The poet in Luthe. The law, even his dearly beloved law, in kicking Farjeon out he had killed some of the thing he loved.

And each man kills the thing he loves, did not the poet say? Perhaps it was universal. But the Judge did not feel it related to that in him which read English literature, to that within him which was American. He felt it profoundly related to his Germanism.

For within, the Judge was deeply Germanic. Ah, the German nation. Its heroic tragedies and defeats. The things it just had to do by force. The way it had to, time and again, overwhelm the French. As he had to overwhelm his beloved, for she was beautiful to him. And how it had to sap the soul, conquer peoples, in the end hold its head bloody but unbowed. And the *Gemütlichkeit* with which it could always make friends, squirm out of it.

Not that the Judge was in any way Nazi. At one time he had wanted a strong Germany. But it had become too strong for him, he saw it downing the world. Men at the Steuben Club had called him a traitor to Germany. But never, never would he be a traitor to the United States, for which he had fought. Because Germany, like a naughty child, did not know its place. Its place was at the centre of a strong Europe, not downing the world. The Nazi

Spitsbube had gone further than that, that's why they had to pay. Yet Germany, dear Germany, in the long run would squirm out of it. Do it again.

So the Judge sat, strong, ruminating, when his son was announced. Ah his son, his son. If only his son were strong, less Frenchman in him, more German. "Well, my son," he said, looking at Luthe, "have you come to save the world?" It was his idea of a joke. Luthe, when he was a boy, had had a theory that art could save the world.

It was, thought Luthe, a wonderful and fortunate introduction. "No, Father," he said quietly, "just to save one boy, one boy that's done nothing to you. The kind of boy you admire, Father, a soldier."

And the Judge, looking into those green eyes, somehow got it. This, strangely, mysteriously enough, was going to be related to that young man—within himself too, as of distant screeching in the forest of his being a voice cried: my son, my son.

Luthe stated his case.

"I can do nothing for him," the Judge said.

"Why not?"

"Because he has offended."

"Offended," said Luthe, "whom?"

But the Judge didn't answer. The answer was plain enough. It hung in the air. Offended the mill, the powers that be, Order. At the same time the Judge felt himself caught. Between Eugene and his son. And if only between the two he could choose his son, somehow win him. "Luthe," he said, feeling the inner grind of a sore subject, "when are you going to do something, when are you going to work?"

And with his eyes sad, and his carven lips smiling, "Perhaps soon," Luthe said. And then he added, "Father, suppose I joined counsel for that young man, went into court for him?"

The Judge felt a dagger in his heart. But maintaining composure, frowning, speaking as if the scene were already being enacted in the shades beneath him, "That," said the Judge, "would be quite a spectacle for the city."

And with his green eyes upon him, "I may be in that spectacle, Father," Luthe said.

The Judge felt it. The killer quality. They said some surgeons had it. He knew he had it. "Hear me, Luthe," he said. "If you

in any way whatsoever step into that court, I'll make it harder for that young man."

And Luthe, looking at those blue denim eyes out of the blazing face, believed him.

He dropped his eyes. He dropped the matter. He thought of going up to his mother's room, kissing her cheek. But he hated doing it when his father was around. He and Ron used to have a terrible name for their fathers, the killers. Always said with amusement, always felt underneath.

"Good night, Father," he said.

All Saturday night Luthe struggled with himself, and most of Sunday. Perhaps this was something he should do, walk into court, see what the old heller would make of it. He thought of the soldiers, and Ron, Ron of all that talent, that bubbling joy, dead in the South Pacific. He knew Ron didn't have to go, his father had a place all fixed for him in Washington. "And you'll be necessary," Uncle Eugene had said.

Ron said, "I'll try to be necessary in the Marines." No commission, nothing, just the Marines. And this fellow, this kid in whose arms he had died——

Toward evening, Sunday, Luthe got hold of Joe. He explained matters to him. "I don't think I better go up against my father," he said. And then, his eyes quite honest, "Perhaps I haven't got the nerve."

Joe had the sense of this relating to Luthe's not having faith. If he had the faith, he said to himself, he'd find the nerve.

Well, there was nothing to it. It was all over but the shooting. Or maybe he had a chance. The only thing he knew with definiteness was that he had to take Stell out to-night.

He tried to be cheerful with her, but perhaps she felt his worry underneath, perhaps she was just plain worried with her own worries. They had seen a movie, all about love, and as they walked home, "Joe," she said, "what'll be? After you get out of it, what'll be?"

So, he thought, what'll be? She had been giving him the "what'll be" recently, in her eyes, in her sighs, even in an occasional look at him in court. He knew perfectly well what she meant. A certain male something in him was prepared to say: what's the matter with it this way? But he knew that wouldn't

do. He also knew it wasn't right, even with himself. It was, in a manner of speaking, the end of the war. Peace had not been declared, but it was plain now that there could be a military victory of the United Nations, the United States. And with it a problem came and stood at him. What of himself, the post-war world? Yes, he wanted to invent. But was that all? No, he also wanted to live. And with Stell by his side. Why? He wasn't gifted enough to know why, and from his talks with the guys, he never found anyone who was. He was just willing to accept it as "one of those things," her tall, lean being, her beautiful eyes, and maybe that low, husky voice did something to him, sometimes it was like soft, lovely gravel in his heart. Sometimes it was even his passionate annoyance at her when she got "Polish"—which in truth meant, when she got sad and wanted to know: what'll be?

He kissed her. But she, up against a brick wall, looked at him, impassioned, yet as if some of her were being executed.

He said, "What's the trouble?"

"It's street love, Joe. It began on the street, and here we are. I'm hungry for four walls, Joe. Just you and me and the baby. And the folks"—she shook her head, she couldn't go on.

But he knew what she meant. Just the other night, after taking her home from a movie, he had passed Mr. Witowski. Mr. Witowski was coming from work, heavy and clumpy. He had stared at him with his large, deep, sorrowful eyes. And then, "You mahry?" Mr. Witowski had said. No hello, no goodbye, just the question that seemed to be the expression of his whole worried being, "You mahry?"

"Sure," Joe said, his throat clogging up, "when I get out of this."

Mr. Witowski just looked at him, unrelenting, unforgiving, and clumped away.

So he got it, he got the whole thing. "Look, Stell," he said, putting his hands on her arms, "we'll be married as soon as I get out of it." She began to cry, not wanting to, tears just gathering in her eyes, her eyes looking at him as if to say: you mean it? But she didn't say it. Finally she had to say something, "No kiddin', Joe?"

"No kiddin'."

And now he had to sit through the last of it. All the testimony was in, and Bennie was about to make his plea to the jury. He started, Joe thought, with a look of confidence, his hard brown eyes managing to radiate a friendly and assured quality. At first Joe looked at him, then he found himself listening. Bennie was giving them the man-to-man quality.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, what is this case? Is it just assault and battery, as has been claimed? I don't think so." He looked at Joe. "The defendant has no previous record, he is no assault-and-batterer, he has an exemplary record in the war.

"Millions and millions of our boys go," he said, "leaving the girl they left behind them. That's what the soldier thinks about on the battlefield, ladies and gentlemen, the girl he left behind him." He looked at Mrs. Bushkill, the Fuller Brush man, the soldier's wife. "He thinks about how she's getting on, and if she's true to him, and if anybody's taking advantage of her. That's why this case is important, because millions of boys and girls find themselves separated and hurt and in trouble because of the war."

He looked at Joe, at Stella, the baby. He had insisted that Stella bring the baby. "There it is," he said, spreading his arms toward Joe, the girl, the baby, "that's the whole story. That's what the war means to us," he said, "in human terms.

"Now," he said, "what is this case?" And he went over it. For a moment he seemed to feel the whole damned suffering of humanity. But he had to go on. "Now ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I know what's in your mind." He pointed from Joe to Stella. "Why doesn't he marry her?" And he talked about the shock of coming back and finding such a thing, but doubtless they would marry.

Then he talked about the rape. "Now what evidence have we got?" he said. "A rape usually isn't committed in the street. The Squire admits he was home alone, and that the girl was there." He looked at the jury, his eyes pleading with them. "Do you think a girl" (indicating Stella) "would just come here and tell such a story about herself? Do you think that's pleasant?" he said. "Do you think it's something you would want to do?

"Don't you see, ladies and gentlemen, don't you see we're telling the truth?" Now he was up against it. "The District Attorney says if this is true, why doesn't she do something about it?" He

looked at Stella, she was sobbing, her baby on her lap, Joe's arm about her. "Well, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "that's hard to understand. I myself didn't understand for a long time. I myself pestered her, nearly every day, to go to the District Attorney.

"Why didn't she? And yet, if you think of it, it isn't so difficult to understand. The only thing that's hard about it is that it's the truth. She would come here and go through all this for him" (pointing to Joe), "but for herself"—and he shook his head and waved his hands, as if waving all that away. "It's just too much, ladies and gentlemen," he said. "She's been crucified once, that's enough."

Now he turned his thoughts upon the Squire, and how she had gone to him. "That man has a trust," he said. "I myself stood by as he took the oath of office." He looked at Stoney. Stoney's grey eyes merely stared back. "I heard him promise to uphold the law." And he talked about how to the people of Mill District the Squire was the direct contact with the law and the tradition of the United States. "And what does he do?" he said. "You yourself heard him say he slapped her" (indicating Stell). "That's not part of the law, part of the tradition of the United States, when a soldier's girl comes to you for help, to slap her. And when she's trying to support the soldier's baby, to get her fired from the department store.

"Now the District Attorney," he said, "has protested all along that the Squire and the girl, his treatment of her, all that is another case." He looked at the jury. "It is not another case, ladies and gentlemen. It is the whole of this case. The reason the young man battered the Squire is because of this dreadful thing. You know, ladies and gentlemen, that sometimes a man kills another man." He looked about at the court, the court he knew so well. "I have stood here many times and defended a man accused of murder, and gotten him off. Not because I am such a good lawyer. But because there is something sensible, reasonable, decent, about the law. The law says under certain circumstances a man may be killed, yet the verdict is to be not guilty.

"So in this case," he said. "There are cases involving extreme personal indignity, when we speak of the unwritten law. And there is a higher law. This is a case where the higher law comes in. And without waving any uniform or flags, this is a case where

the soldier comes in, and the soldier's thoughts on the battlefield, and the soldier's girl, and the soldier's baby.

"I am an attorney," Bennie said, "I am pleading for a man, for his life, his time. You people," he said, looking at the jury, "know I mean to give no offence. But I say that in a way" (indicating Joe and Stella and the baby), "in a way that is almost a holy family. And something representative about it in wartime."

He looked at the jury, his eyes pleading with them. "You can do something for these people" (indicating Joe and Stella and the baby). "I think you can make them a happy, normal family. You give the right verdict and I think that this young man will marry this girl. And that in their love, they will wipe all this out of their hearts, and be rid of the memory of that man" (pointing to Stoney).

"Remember one thing," he said. "This soldier, this Marine was coming home. And what was he coming home to?"

Bennie did not feel he had done very well, but he had done the best he could, and he felt it was time to quit. He looked at the jury. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "it's up to you."

It was to this plea, later in the afternoon, that Lordy O'Leary got up to reply. He had a moody feeling this rainy, wintery day. He had no desire to crucify the Marine. But it was up to him to see that the law was observed.

He did not face the jury as he started to speak, he stood with his greying, shaggy hair, shoulders hunched, looking down, the shiny glasses down on his sour nose. "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I know the learned counsel for the defence meant no offence. But," said he, indicating the Marine, Stella, and the baby, "that is not a holy family. And though we do not deny it is some kind of association, and perhaps a touching one, it is by no means a family." He spoke very quietly, with a certain dignity and reserve.

"We have a certain order, ladies and gentlemen, and we do have a certain law. Counsel for the defence has largely spoken away from order and law. He wants to talk about the unwritten law, the so-called higher law.

"I am not here to deny, ladies and gentlemen, that there are such things in the metaphysics of the law. But," he said, "the courts have frowned upon the unwritten law, even counsel for the defence" (looking at him) "who is such an expert in the law

that is unwritten, has not brought such a case into these courts in many years.

"The truth is, ladies and gentlemen, that all this talk of the unwritten law and the higher law is an evasion of the law. Do not think, ladies and gentlemen, that we do not have enough law." He smiled at the jury, and pointed to a large stack of books he had had brought in and piled on a table. "There is plenty of law, ladies and gentlemen.

"But counsel for the defence seeks to evade the law by telling you what a bad man" (indicating the Squire) "that man is. I don't know," said Lordy, looking at the Squire, not very pleased with him, "maybe he is a bad man. And I say again, if I had a proper case I would proceed against him.

"But as it is," he said, "with the young lady for one reason or another unwilling to establish her supposed case, and with all the thousands of people in Pittsburgh who have done business with that man" (indicating the Squire) "not one of them ever making a complaint—all I can say is we better stick to what we know. We can't establish a precedent, ladies and gentlemen, of trying cases on hearsay.

"This is a court of law, ladies and gentlemen." And very seriously, his eyes wide and dull, he looked at the jury. "You and I are not here to write the law. We are all sworn in our duty and we swore to uphold the law, not to write the law.

"Nobody ever said this young man, outside of his assault on the Squire, was a bad young man. And nobody ever said" (indicating the girl), "outside of what she herself told us about herself, that she had ever done anything bad or wrong.

"We merely come into court," he said, "the police and the doctor, the witnesses, and myself, to tell you about an aggravated assault and battery, which has never been denied. And an attempt to kill, which has never been denied." And he started going over what he called "the facts."

Joe, looking on at the quiet and greying Lordy, at the jury, again made aware of "the facts," the pool cue, the inkwell, the three broken ribs . . . he's killing me, Joe said to himself. Lordy's quietness and persistence were so effective. "Three ribs," he was saying, "three ribs.

"Now," said Lordy, looking at Mrs. Bushkill and the rest of them, "I tell you the facts and the other side tells you the humanities.

I tell you what happens every day, and counsel for the defence tells you what happens once in a blue moon. For instance," he said, "counsel for the defence tells you there are cases where a man kills another man, and the man is exonerated. I have tried such cases with counsel for the defence" (indicating Bennie) "and I too went up to the judge with him, and I too asked that the man be exonerated."

He looked at Bennie. "Counsel for the defence will remember." Bennie remembered, said nothing.

"But," said Lordy, "this is not such a case. I have been through all the books" (indicating the yellow volumes stacked on the table) "to see if there is any way of letting this young man out." He looked at Joe, Joe looked back at him. Lordy turned to the jury. "The books say," he said, pointing to them, "that if you assault and batter a person, if there is an attempt to kill, there is no way out.

"It is the law. As counsel points out, once in a great while there may be a justifiable homicide. But there simply is no such thing as justifiable assault and battery, justifiable attempt to kill, it does not exist in the books" (pointing to them). "Except in cases of self-defence. And there has been no claim of self-defence, not one shred of it. They admit the young man went into the Squire's court and battered him.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "considering the defendant's youth and good record in the Service, I don't wish to be harsh on him. I do not ask the extreme penalty. And I still say I will prosecute anyone" (looking at Stoney) "if the evidence is brought to me." He walked up and down, moody, brooding, deliberate. And turning to the jury, "I'll tell you what this case is, ladies and gentlemen. This is a hard thing to say, but I have my sworn duty to do. This case is a uniform and a story.

"Now," he said, "I too wore that uniform. Some of you may know, I am a past Commander of an American Legion Post." He looked up at the Judge. "His Honour served with great distinction. Counsel for the defence has served too," he said, looking at Bennie, willing to honour him in this. "Many, many of us serve, this is our country."

His simple face, wide at the cheekbones, his dull, mottled eyes, appealed to the jury. "But," he said, "the uniform imposes an obligation. The wearer is to uphold the law, not destroy the law.

Where goes the uniform, there goes the law and tradition of the United States. Or else," he said, "what do we have? Are we to have thirteen million men come back, take the law into their own hands? That's anarchy. They don't want that. And what do they expect of us, what is our obligation?" And, facing the jury, solemnly he told them, "Our obligation is to preserve the law and tradition of the United States. And when the boys return, hand it back to them, unsullied. And what's fair for one is fair for the other."

Joe Drew, looking on, was much taken. He was in particular taken by Lordy's grave face, by the horn-rimmed spectacles down on his nose, by his soft manner, by his unhurried way, by the sense of right, reasonableness, he wove on his side. Lordy was doing a job. And he had to hand it to him. Grateful as he had been to Bennie, and feeling Bennie had done well enough, he knew Lordy had topped him. Despite his inner shake, something in him mounted to a high place from which he could look down. And he saw a strange thing. Both Bennie and Lordy were good lawyers, both had done their best, if he had had Lordy and Bennie had been Prosecutor, it might have turned out just this way. It was that kind of a case.

"Of course we do not admire the Squire's slapping the girl," Lordy said. "Or having her fired. But two wrongs do not make one right. And let us not forget something." He held up three fingers. "Three ribs broken . . . three ribs.

"Let me tell you something," Lordy said. "This young man is guilty. And his own words prove him guilty. He said, 'I'd do it again.'"

He paused, as if he had a great deal more to say. And then, "That's all," he said, and sat down.

It was not yet the end of the day. The Judge was faced with his summation. The Judge was no longer worried as to what harm this case might do the mill. His very presence in court had stopped all that. And he was no longer so certain that they need have thrown Farjeon out. And as for the young man, son of the old inventor, he wished the whole thing had been different. Indeed, the young man's manner in court, and his medal, had been persuasive. And he was a nice-looking young man, tall, slim, rugged, dark—

Within himself the Judge heard a voice cry: My son, my son.

"I shall sum up in the morning," he said. "There are some matters, matters of law, that I wish to pursue." He spoke in a dry, scholarly, impersonal way.

"Court is adjourned," he said.

The next morning the Judge summed up.

"First," he said, "I would like to thank the District Attorney and counsel for the defence. Both these gentlemen have made a most able presentation. And I would like at this time to refer to Judge Farjeon. We all hope for his speedy recovery."

You do like hell, thought Joe. The Judge went on. "Now as to matters in evidence that Judge Farjeon allowed. I think they should have been allowed. In some cases," he said, speaking to the jury, "where facts are hard and dry, there is no need for ramification of evidence. But in this case, where there are many elements, I may say, involving the humanities, I feel Judge Farjeon was quite right in seeking the widest application of the law.

"I, myself," he said, "have tried to see the case in that light, and for that reason allowed the subpoena of the books of the mill" (indicating the large red ledgers which had been in court the last few days). "There is no doubt about it," he said, "the books of the mill show the young lady's father was hired and fired just as she says. Whether or not anybody at the mill obliged anybody would be hard to say." The Judge thought about it. "It does not seem likely, the mill is a great organization, it produces for the war, indeed it has much to do.

"Now as to those matters which the prosecution has insisted were outside the realm of this case. There too I am inclined to agree with the defence, everything in this case is in the realm of this case. And I agree with the District Attorney, we cannot look with favour upon the Squire's slapping the girl, or having her fired, for that matter."

He looked at the jury. "However, to you members of the jury I must say that the District Attorney is right to one extent. There is no such thing as justifiable assault and battery, no such thing as justifiable intent to kill. As the District Attorney pointed out, the only defence in such a case is self-defence. And that defence does not exist here."

Jesus, thought Joe, he's going to give it to me.

"I must say," the Judge continued, "that in certain respects

the District Attorney took over my prerogative and summed up for me. As a matter of fact," he said, looking at the jury, "you have only one thing to consider.

"If this young man, the defendant, Joe Drew, did, in your opinion, assault and batter the Squire, then he is guilty. And if you think that while attacking him he did say, 'I'll kill you, I'll tear you in half,' then there is an intent to kill.

"But," he said, his eyes resting upon the jury with some severity, "I, like the District Attorney, would prefer no harsh penalty. But if you believe that this young man, the defendant, Joe Drew, is guilty of the assault and battery, is guilty of intent to kill, then there is but one thing you can do.

"You must consider the law, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. Either the defendant is guilty, or not guilty. The law allows for no in-between, there is no twilight in it, it is black and white." Surgery, he said to himself. Surgery. "You may find him guilty on one count, or both counts, or none."

And with that the Judge got up, retired.

The jury filed out. Joe looked at Bennie. He could see, by the sombreness of Bennie's eyes and the mechanical attempt to smile, that it was all over.

When the jury had completed its deliberations the Judge came in. Mrs. Bushkill, as forelady, was put through the paces by Titus.

"Have you reached a verdict?" Titus said.

Mrs. Bushkill said, "Yes, we have."

And upon being asked what it was——

"Guilty," she said unhappily, "guilty on both counts."

Bennie asked for a poll of the jury, it was granted. The clerk now asked each juror in turn what his verdict was. Bennie knew it was no use, he was just doing everything he could, and one after another, rather unhappily, the members of the jury murmured, "Guilty."

Bennie asked for a stay of sentence. The Judge looked at him, he was thinking of Luthe. An impulse to kindness came to the Judge, he said he would not sentence the defendant for thirty days.

Stoney, still in his grey, with a look, not of exultation, but of bitterness and propriety, left the court. Greeny Murowski, Tommy Nowak and the rest of his fuglemen followed after.

Lordy came up to Joe, he didn't have to do it, but his large

dullish face was rather moody and touched. "Sorry, fellah, I hope there's no hard feelings," he said.

Bennie went into the matter of Joe's status for the next thirty days, saying, "We don't have to renew bail, do we, Your Honour?"

The Judge looked at him, something sorrowing in his eyes. "What do you want me to do with him?"

"Could you give him into my custody?" Bennie said.

And the Judge, thinking of Luthe, nodded.

And now the remaining figures of the case left the court, Bennie and Joe and Stella and Ned Woolbine. Bennie's hard brown eyes took a final stare at the tipstaff, Titus Jones, who didn't seem any too happy.

Bennie had a strange thought: it all might have been the same if Judge Farjeon had remained on the bench. The case had an old trouble, Joe Drew was morally right, legally wrong.

Joe walked through the downstairs corridor. Up ahead was the greyish light of the street. He was conscious of the people around him, Stell, Bennie, Ned Woolbine, Miss Aiggers. All nice people, all for him, Stell loved him, but he felt strangely alone. He felt walled up in a tunnel, as if all about him were not living people, but one great ironclad entity:

GUILTY.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NAKED CITY

SO THEY HAD FOUND him guilty.

He had been guilty of crying under bombardment. He had been guilty of scalping that Jap. But he didn't feel guilty of this. And he would never give in. Not to Stoney, not to the Judge, not to circumstances.

So Joe Drew spoke to himself.

He had been a soldier, he had been surrounded, enfiladed, he knew what it was. They got me blocked, he said to himself. But I'll bust out. I'll get Stoney if it's the last thing I do.

But his problem right now was not merely getting Stoney. He had to get out of this thing, out of this "guilty."

He went over to Bennie's. The Negroes were there, the criminals, the slum mothers. But somehow he felt he was the outsider. He saw it in the eyes of Miss Annie Aiggers. Once, when there was life, hope to his case, he had been warmly received. Not merely as a client and Bennie's friend, but as a special case. Now Miss Aiggers had a look in her eyes: Oh, it's you.

"Mr. Jordan," he said, "is he in?"

He had to wait a while. And finally he saw a moody, brooding Bennie. He felt Bennie not receptive to him, but—

"Ben," he said, "I'd like to go on."

Bennie, his eyes hard and understanding, nodded. He seemed to say: sure, you'd like to go on. He sighed. His sigh seemed to bridge ten thousand words. He said, "How?"

Joe felt set back. "I don't know," he said, "take an appeal."

Bennie just looked at him. "On what?"

Joe said, "I don't know." He wanted to say: you're the lawyer. He said, "I see appeals in the paper all the time."

Bennie nodded. His hard brown eyes seemed to say: not on this. The only thing he could appeal on, he was thinking, was the Judge being a stockholder in the mill. It was of doubtful value, and he couldn't do it, anyway. He had agreed not to, the night they had kicked Farjeon out.

"I don't know, kid," he said. "To tell you the truth, I don't know what to do. I threw all my punches."

A thought came to Joe. He didn't think it was a good thought—"I mean to pay you, Ben."

Bennie just looked at him. "It isn't that," he said. "It's just that"—he didn't know how to explain himself. "Listen," he said, trying to be matter-of-fact, "you give me a coupla days to think about it, then come back. Maybe something'll turn up."

But as they looked at each other, Joe felt nothing would turn up. He felt something worse than that, as if the bond between them had gone.

"O.K., Ben," he said. But as he went out, he was saying to himself: He's not the same man.

Joe was right. And Bennie, remembering the kid's dark, appraising eye, felt the kid had found him out. The truth was, he was not the same man.

For once in over twenty years he had tried to see justice done. And he had got a kick in the pants. It wasn't merely that the verdict had gone against him, and that the Judge and some of the other judges might from now on be against him. But in a manner of speaking the city was against him. And he felt it, he was very sensitive to the city.

Pittsburgh, as he saw it, was a small town. Yes, it was a big city, in population, in war industries, in being the heart of the war effort, in its potential for the post-war world. But still it had that quality of everybody knowing everybody, of everybody knowing everybody else's business. And he had received some wonderful publicity out of the trial. Only it had put him on the wrong side, made him a wrong guy.

He could see it in the eyes, the faces, of the men he met on the street, in and around the court building, men he had met every day for years. And some of them said things, in a jolly enough way, laughing and smiling, but all the same—"You're not fighting windmills, are you, Bennie?" And the Civil Liberties Union had called him up and offered him a case.

Only he wasn't that kind of a lawyer. He wasn't a radical lawyer, a civil liberties lawyer, a human rights lawyer. He was just a plain, everyday criminal lawyer. To put in the fix, cop a plea, get you a divorce. That was his line, and he knew he would be all right if he stuck to it. But this other stuff . . . Bennie felt he had been on an emotional jag, a spree. Lordy had foretold the whole thing. "Be regular," Lordy had said, "be regular."

Oh, if he had won he would have been a great guy. But this way, to defend a man accused by a Squire, to put a Squire on trial, practically, with its implied threat to the politicians and other Squires, no, it had made him a wrong guy.

He remembered the words of Lordy, "Next week it'll be the pickpocket and the whore." Only he wasn't too sure. The criminal underworld was very conservative. And though he hadn't lost any clients yet, he could see a questioning look in their eyes . . . he was the guy who was out fighting a Squire. They needed a guy who was pals with Squires.

Besides, thought Bennie, even if he wanted to go on with the case, what could he do? All legal avenues were closed.

The question was, should he abandon the case right now? Or

should he stick to the Marine, even if there wasn't much hope, go down with the ship?

Bennie was in a moral quandary. And whenever Bennie was in a moral quandary, which had happened a few times in his life, there was one man he wanted to speak to. His "uncle," the old man, the bearded Jew, his fist shaking at synagogues and iniquities.

Toward the end of the day Bennie went to see him.

In a spare room in Homestead lived the old man, the old Jew, whom Bennie sometimes thought of as the Moralist. For to the old man there was only one question: right or wrong. And for this he had abandoned much of ordinary life, stopped working for money, lived on a crust of bread. He was quite conscious, the old man was, that the world thought him crazy, a fool, and in many ways morally wrong. This did not trouble him. And it did not trouble him to stand shaking his fist at synagogues and churches, should he think them wrong . . . or to land in a lock-up. He lived by the Right, and the word of God was Right, it was in the Book, you could see it, if you didn't want to live that way you might wander through a thousand purgatories, but he lived by the Right.

He lived in a small, spare box-like room, in a loft, in the shadow of the Homestead Mills, the greatest mills on earth, that threw their flames into his room, that made him feel the hell on earth, the iniquity of the war, the burning senselessness of man.

So he sat, with the shadows of the flames filtering over him, hand on the Book, collar button in his neckband, eyes staring as Bennie sat opposite.

"You have read of my case in the papers, Uncle?"

And the old man said, "I have read."

Bennie told him more about it, how the legal avenues were closed, how the young man wanted to go on. "What shall I do, Uncle?" he said.

"Is," said the old man, "the young man innocent or guilty?"

"Guilty in a small way," said Bennie, "but really innocent."

"Innocent," said the old man, "then how can you leave him to the guilty?"

And Bennie tried to explain, the closed avenues, his own way

of life . . . then he saw that the old man wasn't listening. The old man's eyes were like isinglass, some inner flame kindling behind.

"I see him," the old man said. "I see him returned to the city. The soldier, the Marine. They sent him to fight," he said. "He stands now, like a problem, in their city." He looked off, as if seeing him. "He stands, he asks for the Right, for the Bread of the Spirit, and you give him a stone."

The fires of the mills went up, showers of sparks flew by the dusty window, their shadows showering upon the ceiling.

The old man looked at Bennie. "Why don't you help him?" he said.

Bennie talked about the closed way—"Bah," the old man said. And looking at Bennie, "You used to hit people for money." That wasn't quite the way Bennie felt about it, he had been in the ring, helped out the people who had helped him. "Now," the old man said, "you help people for money."

He looked at Bennie. "What good does money do us—I mean our people—we are hated for it."

"Other people make money," Bennie said.

"Who's talking about them?" the old man said. His eyes dreamed back. "Bennie, we used to be shepherds, we tended flocks, we played lutes." And then, to himself, "Lost, lost . . . or perhaps resurrected in Palestine," he said.

He looked at him now. "Bennie, in the war we lost five million Jews. Maybe more."

"Others lost," Bennie said.

The old man looked at him. "And for what?" he said. "Let there be less iniquity, help the young man."

Now Bennie knew. There was no use talking to the old man. He lived in another world. At the same time he had communicated something. Bennie saw something he had not seen before, something about Joe, something he knew Joe did not see . . . that idea of standing before the city, the problem of the returned soldier, what were they going to do with him?

Personally, he knew what he could do. He could get hold of Joe, put it all on the table, be on the level. Which he did. "There's no use, kid," he said, explaining the whole thing, "maybe it's my fault, maybe I don't know what to do, maybe you need another lawyer. I'll file briefs, I'll take an appeal, I'll help you in every

way I can. But," he said, looking into Joe's dark, wounded eyes, "I don't know what good it'll do."

So Joe came to understand his situation, and in a strange way to know what to do. He did not believe in other lawyers, they too would collapse before the iron-bound law. He had to become his own lawyer, he had to step into Bennie's shoes, he had to win his own case.

"How?" said Stell.

He didn't answer, he didn't know.

"Joe," she said, "can't you get it out of your mind?"

His black eyes had a sharp quality. "No, I can't get it out of my mind."

"But," she said, "it's an obsession, Joe."

"All right," he said, "it's an obsession." They were in his room, but his mind had gone beyond the four walls, he was thinking of the city, the city of mechanical structures, with men tending them, standing before the flame, as her father did, their lives in Stoney's hands, the Judge's hands. "What do you want me to do," he said, "just lie down and take it?"

"Joe." She looked at him, soft, appealing. "Why don't you forget it? Do you remember your promise, Joe?"

Certainly he remembered, about being married. He hated to renege. "I said if I got out of it. I'm not out of it."

"Suppose you never get out of it, suppose you have to serve?"

He said, "I don't know."

She put her arms about his neck, her eyes searching him. "Joe," she said, "I'll wait for you. Suppose it's a year, two years, three. I'll wait for you. Meanwhile I'll work, I'll take care of the baby. But give me something solid, Joe. Something I can stand on. Let me feel I'm married, Joe."

He was very grateful to her. But—— "Look, baby," he said, "would you want me to forget it, have them brand me, all my life, guilty? Your kid's father," he said, "giving up without a fight?"

"You've fought, Joe."

He waved it away. At this moment even his first day on the beaches seemed more hopeful, all you had to do was go in and fight. But here? . . . She was looking at him, no longer pleading, but direct. "Yes, Joe," she said, "I'd like you to drop it, for your sake and mine."

He wanted to say: I couldn't do that to you, to the baby, be a jailbird without a fight. Suddenly, feeling her desertion, he got angry. Goddam Polacks, he wanted to say. And thinking of Bennie's desertion, goddam Jews, goddam world. Then he felt it wasn't right, he remembered the graves on Guadal. Blood, humanity, dripping down to earth. And we who are left on it. Oh God . . . is it to be in vain? And to himself he said: Am I like Luthe? Am I a man without faith? Is there no way?

He looked out the window. Snow was falling. God was garmenting the earth, as his father used to say. Pop, Ron, you men who were gods to me, show me the way.

Stell, looking at him, felt she had lost. He was tied to something in himself. Maybe he was right. But as far as she was concerned, he was wrong. He ought to be concerned about her, going out to her, instead of to some notion. And still, as she used to say: you don't owe me anything, that is, if you don't feel that way. My God, I can't drag it out of you.

She reached for her pocketbook. "Call me up some time," she said.

As he saw her tall, curvy being go, those slim legs he loved walk out the door . . . wait, he wanted to say, Stell, we can fix this up, it's still you and me, we'll work something out, we've got the thirty days. But he couldn't say it. And to himself: maybe there's something wrong with me.

He felt quite alone. Yet in some manner she was there, the warmth of her, the humanity she brought into the room, the honest love in her eyes . . . Christ, I don't want to become a ghost, he said to himself.

He looked at the four walls, then he came out of it.

He had a number of things to do. For one thing, the time had come when he had to take his uniform off. He looked at it with a pang, that blue coat with the decoration. He wanted to call Stell up, have her around, make some sort of ceremony of it. He took it off, hung it in the closet.

He looked at his blue uniform, at his forest-green uniform. He looked around. His room was still the room he had fallen into the night he had come back, and Stell had told him about Stoney. It was a miserable, hopeless, dollar-a-night cubicle, with a carpet as green, worn, beautiful, ragged, meaningless as seaweed. It hadn't mattered when he had been here from night to

night, hoping each night he'd soon be out of it. But now, for the first time since coming back to Pittsburgh, he had a solid lump of days, he might do something with them, if he could get out of here.

He found another place, a small hotel down by the water-front, Potter's, hardly more expensive, but clean, quiet, respectable. His room had a large bay window looking out on the Monongahela.

Into this bay window he stuck a drawing-board, for he was going to start drawing the things he wanted to invent. He knew, in a way, it was crazy, twenty-seven days. "That's crazy," Stell would say. Mom had sometimes had that attitude about Pop.

He had twenty-seven days. And if he cracked out with something, if he could get his ack-ack, his fog-cutter, his new sensible automobile jack down on paper, maybe something would come of them. If something came of them, it would be a help to Stell, Mom, the baby, even if he was sent away.

Meanwhile work. His fog-cutter, based on an idea of Pop's, would filter the fog up there, so the flying guys could see plain as day. Come on, kid, work.

So he was seated one morning at his drawing-board when the phone rang. He heard a girl's voice, silvery and like a bell. "Is this Joe Drew?"

He said yes.

"I'm Sylvia MacTavish. I'm not far away, may I drop in?"

He said yes. He found the idea of meeting her profoundly exciting. Memories came back to him, things Ron had told him, how they had been brought up together, her passion for Ron, her disappointment in love which somehow led to her disappointment with life in general. "She got tired of the kind of people she used to know, then she found something, she's a Communist," Ron had said. Strange, a Communist with three million bucks of her own, and now that Ron was dead, the possible inheritor of the Osmond fortune.

She arrived. He was struck by the pallid, carven quality of her face, her horn-rimmed spectacles on a pert little nose, her black hair, her rather large teeth. "Are you Joe Drew?"

He nodded, she came in. She looked like one of those movie actresses made up as a schoolmarm; at the end of the picture, when she took her glasses off, you were supposed to think how pretty she was. "I'll tell you why I've come," she said. "Luthe's

told me about your case." They looked at each other, the look was about Luthe. "I understand your lawyer's given you up." He said nothing. "If he doesn't want to go on with it, we will."
"We?"

And she explained. She worked for the Communist Party. Some people she knew, having read his case in the papers, had an idea. They would get other people, "C.I.O. people, and some Liberals. Maybe the local P.A.C. We'll form a Defence Committee, hire lawyers." Though she hadn't much hope of the courts. "Not," said she, "with my uncle on the bench. But we'll take your case to the people."

He said how, and she told him. The Communists had small theatre groups, "a mobile theatre." The Defence Committee would hold meetings in various halls and districts, not only would speakers tell about the case and try to raise a defence fund, but the mobile theatre would enact some of the trial. "We might make it a mock trial," said she.

To Joe it was a rather surprising idea. He had no particular use for the Communists, though he had met a couple in the South Pacific who seemed all right. Also, he had thought the Communist Party dissolved. But all that was beside the point. The point was, somebody was willing to take an interest in him, in his case, willing to fight. There was another thing that interested him, it gave him a lever with Bennie. He could go to Bennie and say: if you won't fight, they will. And later in the day, after a long talk with Sylvia MacTavish, he went over to Bennie's and said it. But Bennie only seemed annoyed. And resting his squat hands on the bald spot in the middle of his dome, and looking at him with almost businesslike indifference——

"Now listen," Bennie said, "the question is, do you want to get out of it? Or do you want to be a celebrated case?"

"I want to get out of it."

"O.K.," said Bennie, "then don't annoy the Judge. I know these people can hire a hall, and make a lotta noise, but that'll only annoy the Judge. And right now, the only man that can help you is the Judge."

Joe saw the sense of this.

"Besides," Bennie said, "I'm taking an appeal." And his hard, practical eyes looked at him as if to say: Now get out of here, don't bother me, I'm doing what I can.

Joe went back to his drawing-board. But he was blocked. The fog-cutter, in particular, depended on something his father had been working on. There would be drawings of it up at the farm.

Christmas was coming. He would like to get out of this damned town, the dirty snow, the slush underfoot, the shopping crowds, in their revelry of the war, shopping as they never shopped before. He'd like to get out to the country, have a chance to think, see Mom. And take Stell, and the baby.

Stell. He knew what she wanted. She wanted to be part of something. She wanted acceptance.

Words came to him: she walked out on me. Well, what if, he said to himself. You couldn't make anything out of that, except trouble. Come on, kid, call her up.

He did, and when he saw her, told her his idea: they would go up to the country, he and she and the baby, and have Christmas with Mom.

"Joe," she said, her eyes glistening, "you don't mean it."

He nodded, he did mean it.

"Joe, I thought you never wanted her to see the baby."

And smiling at her, "Don't be a chump, I'm just stupid," he said.

"But, Joe, will it be all right, your Mom?"—and he made her understand, she didn't realize how it was between him and Mom, they loved each other, even if there were ways in which they didn't click. "Besides," he said, "you mustn't think it's just her farm, it's mine, she always thinks of it that way." He saw Mom now, her black eyes yearning to have him back on the farm. "Your farm, Joe," she used to say.

"Come on," he said, "let's not horse around, let's go and send the telegram."

And they were on their way.

The great American public had been told not to travel, so it travelled. Everybody and his brother, as Joe put it to himself, was on the train. It was only a local, he thought, it didn't go any place, it just wound up the Pennsylvania hills. He had seen it when it looked tired, soiled, and empty, now it looked like a Christmas poster, soldiers, sailors, and sweater girls with skis and skates. Luckily, and probably because of the baby, they got a seat.

He looked at him, his baby, with those violet-grey eyes. The

baby had a serious look, darn serious all right, then suddenly it smiled.

"Holy smoke," said Joe, "he's got a tooth."

Stella looked at him, the father, with his dark eyes and the new grey fedora and his smile full of white teeth. "He's got six teeth," she said.

The kid had a blue outfit, a peaked blue cap on its red face. There was a fringe of blond hair beneath the blue cap, and he had a blue coat, thick and shaggy as bearskin. All of a sudden the baby started to climb up on Stell. "Come on," she said, "climb up on Mama."

Mama. Jesus Christ, he never thought of her as Mama . . . the little guy said, "Mama."

What do you know, thought Joe, he speaks.

He did more than that, he stood on her lap, put his little arms aloft, stood there, his whole pudgy self swaying, in a strange exultation, laughing and smiling, testing his prowess.

My God, thought Joe, he stands, he has teeth, he says Mama. "Say Papa," Stella said. And the little fellah tried it, "Papa."

Christ, thought Joe. He thought of what an accidental father he had been, how other guys like himself got caught, because they were young and there was a war. But he was glad this little boy was on earth, and related to him. Good Lord, thought Joe, Christmas is here.

It was dawn when they got to Emmerton. Mom was waiting on the platform. Joe saw her before the train stopped, her old battered greatcoat, galoshes. And that hat.

Pop and Uncle Charlie had always called it *that* hat. It was blue and triangular, her George Washington hat they used to call it, a beautiful hat once, back in the days when they had dough. It was all faded and weather-beaten now, but still blue and triangular, and around the rim, a silver fringe.

As she stood on the snow of the platform, tall, pale, stiff in the dawn, she looked, he thought, like a grenadier. "Mom," he said, "you remember Stell?"

"Certainly." Her black eyes shone in her milky face, her pale pink lips in a formal smile. "How are you, Stella?" and she extended her hand. "Merry Christmas."

Stella had a hard time shaking hands, because of the baby.

"Here, let me hold him," Mom said. She took him. And as she looked into the baby's eyes, Joe knew what she was thinking: the Jumper's eyes.

"There's the car," Mrs. Drew said. "Joe, you drive."

He drove. Stell sat beside him. In the back seat were Mom and the baby . . . let him drive, Mrs. Drew was thinking, he was the man of the family, let him drive. And as she didn't know what to say, and wanted her exterior pleasant, she let him ride with his bride.

His bride. Strange, he didn't marry her, yet would take her out here. Well, what was the use of thinking of that?

As for the girl, she had nothing against her. She remembered her, her flaxen hair, which her mother had struggled to fix in loose curls that always fell apart, and her little legs dangling under the piano. Now the Witowskis had the piano. She remembered the credit they extended when they had the grocery store. A thought occurred to her: cast your bread upon the waters.

Well!

Thee must not sit so stiffly, said something within her. And to Stella she began to talk about the baby, how often do you feed him, how much does he weigh, let's see, how old was he now. . . . Something settled in Joe, he knew his mother could be difficult, but she was trying not to be. Nor was he any longer worried about the old Ford, its 200,000 miles, the shredded tyres, and whether he should put on chains as they approached the deeper snows. Somehow the sway and rhythm of the car and the up-swooping hills, like great white upswinging birds, filled his heart with the sense of returning to something he loved.

For whatever Joe Drew was in Pittsburgh, resentful, cantankerous, murderously determined to beat his way, out here in the hills and snows something in his spirit lifted. Here he returned as a possessor, something in him said: this is mine own, mine own United States.

The house, as he saw it, filled him with an intensity of emotion, the emotion that only one who has lived in a house in the country, and repaired its roof, and cemented its chimneys, and French-drained its cellar, can have. But also, he loved it as only one who knew and loved Pennsylvania houses could love it. It was an old house, the first section built during the Revolutionary War, the other sections added a long time ago. It was built of fieldstone,

reddish, brownish, greyish fieldstone . . . its red was the red of sumac and oak, its brown the leaves as they scurried and fell. Out of the trees, a million years ago, came these stones, and still with the colour of living flaming trees, the reddish stones glistened under wisps of snow.

The house was on a knoll, it "rested," the knoll rolling up to it and gently away from it, as if God and man had had a hand there . . . and five windows and two doors across its front. "How beautiful," Stella said. Joe, seeing his mother at the moment, knew these were the luckiest words Stella ever said.

"Take her in the house, Joe," his mother said. "I have to water the animals."

Stella never had seen such a house, she couldn't understand how such people had lived in her tenement. The tables and chairs were old wood, hand carved, maple and cherry and pine, and a lot of old glass, some of it set in the deep windows, the coloured glass sparkling in the sun. And what order, what cleanliness, what space, and that staircase that seemed to float up the centre hall. "Joe," she murmured, "why didn't you tell me?"

And when he was helping her settle the baby, "Joe, what kind of animals?"

"Goats."

"Goats?" she said. She was disappointed. "Don't goats eat tin cans?"

"In the comic strips," he said. "Don't let Mom hear you say that, she's a nut on goats." And he told her, Mom would probably insist that the baby have goat milk. "Why, Joe?" And he told her, some people believed goat milk was better. "Why?" And he explained, in goat milk the cream did not rise to the top, but stayed with the milk. She looked at him, her eyes big and grateful. "I love it when you tell me things." And he, looking at her, feeling a sudden flood of gladness that she was happy, "I'm going to tell you lots of things."

And to himself: I'm falling in love with her.

Mom came in. "Joe, go chop down a tree." Stella, looking meekly from one to the other, did not understand. Then she saw him go out to the woods and chop down a Christmas tree. And when he had it in, "Joe," his mother said, "go up to the attic and get the trimmings." My, she's bossy, Stella thought. I wish I could boss him that way . . . then she saw, by the way he smiled at his

mother, it wasn't bossy, but something between them, the way they had prepared for Christmas all through the years.

And when the old hat-boxes of trimmings were downstairs—"Stella," said Mrs. Drew, "can you trim a Christmas tree?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Mrs. Drew almost smiled. But she didn't. Her eyes communicated: you need not yes ma'am me, be easy, you're young, have fun.

Joe changed his clothes and went out to the barn. He looked at it with the reverence of one who loved and understood. It was a beautiful barn, of stone, bigger than the house, longer. The barn had been built first, for way back then animals were more important than man. First the settlers cleared the fields of stones, piled them in rows. These became the fence rows, the dividing lines of the fields, also ramparts against the Indians. The fields were planted in corn, then slowly, on a diet of gruel, the barn had been built. Then there were animals, man lived with the animals; after a while, in the great expanding economy and the great expanding dignity, he built a house. And here in Pennsylvania, out of fieldstone, work, dignity, freedom, hope, man had built the finest house the common man ever had.

On one of the lintels of the barn his father had carved a legend: THIS IS AMERICA. It was indeed America. At the end of the barn was the long hangar his father had constructed, one of the first aeroplane hangars in this part of the country.

Joe entered the barn, the part nearest the house, the part in which his mother kept her beloved goats. Just as he entered he heard Stell, "Oh, Joe, Joe" . . . and she came running to him in a costume his mother must have picked for her, his old red stocking cap, his old corduroy pants, his old windbreaker. She looked so beautiful, her blonde hair under the stocking cap, and her big blue eyes sparkling with joy. "Oh, Joe, I'm so happy." And about the animals, the barn, "Show me," she said.

He showed her the goats browsing in the stalls, the kids, in their fantastic manner, hopping sideways. He gave her one of the old pitchforks, she helped him give the goats hay, he told her how the kids stood almost as soon as they were born, he stroked the animals and now she stroked them, and looking into their large, luminous eyes with the rectangular pupils, "They're beautiful," she said.

"Sure, if they're cared for decently. Everything is all right if it's cared for decently." And he looked at her, thinking he should have taken more care of her. And she, as if she got it, seemed to glow and tremble. "Oh Joe," she said. And then, looking at him quite realistically, "Joe, what's got into you?"

He wondered. Was it Christmas, or release from the city? Maybe a little. But the real thing, he thought, was an appreciation of Stell, Mom. Particularly Mom. How swell she had been, how simply she had accepted Stell. Or perhaps not accepted her, but she was being such a lady, and a sport. It wasn't easy for her, he knew. And Stell, how damned wonderful she had been to him.

Stell, realizing he was tied up in something, and wanting to find him in simple things, thinking of the cheeses hanging in the kitchen, of the milk Mrs. Drew was preparing for shipment to a Pittsburgh hospital. "Joe," she said, "is this the way your mother lives?"

He nodded. It was a living as poor and sparse and hard-working as could be, but with special things. He explained it to her. The apples fell in the orchard. That meant apple jelly, and vinegar and cider. In the early summer the wild strawberries came. That meant wild strawberry jam, and Mom sold some to specialty shops in the city. The wood for the great stone fireplace she picked up from the woods and fields. She took care of a neighbour, now and again, when sickness came, got a little cash. A neighbour ploughed her garden for her, that meant an expenditure of cash. But the garden meant all those wonderful rows of things in the cellar. Sometimes she kept a few chickens . . . the pot roast he had seen on the stove was, he knew, a considerable outlay. Well, it was that kind of a life.

Stell was touched. "But it's beautiful," she said.

He nodded, yes, it was beautiful, it was also sometimes selfish and rock-ribbed and oblivious to things. He couldn't help, for a moment, think of his father. "Come on," he said, and he took her to the part of the barn his father had used as a machine shop. Here his father and his assistants had stood before the forge, had turned the lathe, had experimented in new metals, in things that would go into planes. His mother never entered here these days, and here the spiders had spun their fantasy. The grey and silky webs covered the old machinery, covered the blueprints still laid out on the planning table, the blueprints covered with bits of

straw, dust, dirt, pigeon droppings. To the side there were cabinets full of blueprints, drawings, plans.

A thought struck him. If he couldn't get out of it, if he had to go to jail, he too would have to leave his drawings here, the spiders would spin webs over his fantasy.

He went to a farther part of the barn, where some of Pop's stuff still lay around, the first wheel to fold back into a plane, the first attempt to control fire-power from a central control, some of the first parts to be made of aluminium, magnesium . . . and Stoney and Mr. Osmond and the Judge and the spiders had taken over Pop's things.

"Joe, were these your father's things?"

He nodded.

"Can we talk about it, Joe?"

Sure, Pop was right, why shouldn't they talk about it?

"Is it true," she said, "that at the end"—and her eyes gave him the rest of it: was he crazy?

He didn't know. He didn't think so. Good Lord, Pop . . . his violet-grey eyes under the glasses, his sweetness and gentility, the way he looked over the horizon, the kind of people he was pals with, Billy Mitchell—was Billy Mitchell crazy? No, Pop was hounded, his mind deliberately destroyed by Osmond, the Judge, Stoney. "No," he said, "he wasn't crazy."

He went to the far end of the barn, looked out on the hangar Pop had built, wood and glass, most of the glass out now, pigeons roosting under the broken and sagging roof. . . . Stell put her hand in his. "Is this where the planes flew, Joe?"

"This is where the planes flew."

He looked at a legend Pop had carved over the doorway: I SHOT AN ARROW INTO THE AIR. And another, from Pop's beloved Whitman: LOOK FOR ME UNDER MY BOOTSTRAPS.

I will, Pop.

He went back to the machine shop, the planning table, the cabinets with the blueprints. He brushed the dirt, straw, pigeon droppings away with his hand. "Excuse me, baby, I have to look for something." And he started going over the blueprints. She saw it might take hours. "I guess I better go back, Joe, and help your mother, and finish the tree."

He nodded, he wanted to be alone, for this now was something between vision, hope, and prayer. He was looking for something

with regard to the fog-cutter. It was a combination of photo-electric cell, radio, radar. His idea was to filter fog, filter it, filter it, finally dissolve it, so that even if you were flying in pea soup, you could see clear as day. Of course they had something now, but nothing like what he had in mind. And Pop's old notion of a photo-electric cell, plus radio and film and radar, might be a help.

He searched the blueprints. Help me, Pop.

And an answering vibration came to him: Keep going, son.

It was evening, the second day. Joe was in the barn. Stella was in the kitchen, helping Mrs. Drew, going down the cellar for the six sweets and six sours Mrs. Drew wanted on the table . . . and how quickly, thought Mrs. Drew, the girl caught on. Already she had learned to do several things at once, cool the milk, help with the cheeses, funnel the elderberry wine. And she was good-looking, you had to admit that. And tall. Mrs. Drew simply couldn't abide people who weren't tall.

The girl would—yes she would. Polish or not, she would make a good wife for Joe. And as for the Polish—standing at the window, her hand on the old coffee grinder, her eyes looking out on the brown stubble that stood up stiffly from the twilight snows, Mrs. Drew stopped in the tracks of her thinking and went back.

She was descended, Mrs. Drew was, from the Walking Purchase, from those Quakers who had fooled the Indians, and walked and run themselves into a great section of Pennsylvania. And the Jumper, he too came of good people, aeronauts, one of his ancestors had published a book about aeronautics in 1850. In Lancaster. And ballooned about there, and made observation balloons for the Civil War.

But the line thins. And Joe—who knows, maybe it was a good thing to float this strain on good sound peasant stock. Polish or no Polish.

Mrs. Drew was a goat-breeder. Sometimes her goats brought forty or fifty dollars, sometimes more. Sometimes she managed, by mixing one strain with another, to increase milk production, to achieve a longer period of lactation. She had, too, what is common in many women, and offensive and unromantic to some men, a breeder's point of view about human life: what are we, anyway, animals, you may as well mix the breed with a stock

that will hold up. Of course, we love our own stock, but it isn't always good for us, nature and science tell us that.

Besides, the thing was there already, Joe, the girl, the baby. . . .
"Stella."

The girl faced her, what blue eyes she had.

"Stella, do you like it here?"

Do I like it? My God, it's paradise . . . mutely she looked at Mrs. Drew, nodded.

Mrs. Drew thought. She had a thousand dollars, parcelled out in six banks. And some old coins, hidden away behind various stones in the house. With a thousand dollars you could buy a second-hand tractor, some machinery. He was handy, in the barn was the old forge. In her mind she could see it, the golden grain, waving again on the old farm.

Her son, her son. She was getting on, if only she could have him again, if only he would help her with the earth, they could hold their heads up again. Of course he was in difficulties, but even if the worst came to the worst, this was the place to come back to. If only he would promise, if only he would come back here.

How many times she had asked him, but no.

And this girl, she could make him come back, perhaps. Give up that idiotic inventing, the trouble, the agony, the dream. The land was what counted, the land. And they could have children and more children and fill the land up, build more houses, barns, she herself Granny, and bake bread every day, the brown loaves in the old Dutch oven. And this girl loved the farm, she could see. And she had seen her, just a little while ago, in the hall, staring at the staircase, looking up almost in worship, like a novice in a new faith.

Mrs. Drew's shiny black eyes looked at her. There was only one more question, she knew the answer, but she had to ask.
"Stella, you'd marry him?"

Oh my God . . . Stella nodded.

Mrs. Drew said, "You can come back here, Stella. Any time. You and the baby."

Oh my God, this gave her a home, a home, even if Joe was sent away. She wanted to cry, kiss her, but you didn't kiss Mrs. Drew. Stella, feeling her eyes spurt tears, murmured, "Thank you."

Mrs. Drew took the cover off what was left of the pot roast,

began to season it, they would have sweet and sour pot roast to-night. She thought of something. "Stella," she said, "talk to him, if you can. Maybe we will all live here."

Joe came in from the barn, a number of blueprints in his hand.

It was late. Mom and the baby were already asleep. In a corner, under the lamp, Joe was studying his blueprints. Stella was doing something she rarely did, she was reading. She had asked him to select a book, he had given her a book on goats, and the farm classics, *David Harum*, and David Grayson's *Adventures in Friendship*. She looked them over, she looked at the logs crumbling into embers, at the Christmas tree, shimmering in the corner . . . oh how beautiful all this was. Yes, it was hard work, but she didn't mind that, and maybe they'd be married, and have more children. She looked at him, his jagged face over the blueprints, a long hand going through his overhanging hair. And realizing he was preoccupied, and not wanting to disturb him, softly she went to him, put her hand on him, bent and kissed him. "Good night, Joey," she said.

Joe Drew stayed with his stuff, drawing connecting links between Pop's ideas and his own, hitching his wagon to Pop's star. And within: I'll put it over for us, Pop, he said.

He saw something now. His ack-ack and fog-cutter could be achieved. If only he had the time, if only there wasn't Stoney and the trial. And the sentence, which in a few days would be passed on him.

He turned off the light, as his father sometimes did, sat brooding in the warm, lone, personal darkness. Stoney, the trial, a year, two, three . . . what to do, what to do?

He rose, went to the window, looked out. The night was dark and clear. In the distance he saw a glow in the sky. It wasn't Pittsburgh, but it reminded him of Pittsburgh. For Pittsburgh was the flame, and people standing before the flame. The whole town was a great furnace, he saw it, the city of mechanical structures, stark, stripped, naked before the flame.

Naked was the city, naked as the hammer and the flame. He saw the nakedness of the endless, alley-like streets with their dirty, shambling houses, no toilets, no bath-tubs, no electric lights, just service stars in the windows, as if to say: we served for this. And how mad people got when you said anything about it, as in the

case of Commando Kelly. He saw the nakedness of the faces of the men, both white and black, going out to Neville's Island, to build ships, getting on the crowded, dirty, smelly street-cars, with their right arms almost extended as they got on, as if they were born to be a race of strap-hangers. He saw the nakedness of its coloured whores, with their great black thighs out on the sidewalk, down by the tracks in Homestead. He saw the nakedness of the Hill district, the cheap, dirty vice, which members of the City Council denied, and which the Army said was one of the greatest breeding grounds of syphilis in the United States.

He saw the nakedness of the courts, he had slipped into several at odd moments during the trial. He remembered the lawyers and the judges, nothing fancy about them, making some disposition of the human cargo before them. Ticketing some: sixty days. Ticketing others: Western Penitentiary. Ticketing others: go home and behave yourself.

And some secret light in the eyes of the judges and lawyers, they understood this human freight-handling, they knew how to make ten or fifteen thousand dollars a year out of it. He remembered the nakedness of the Squire courts, of Stoney making dames in his court.

He knew other towns were slicker, but not Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh didn't cover up, he could say that for it. Maybe nobody cared to cover up. As long as the barges brought iron and coke down the river, as long as the trains shuttled in and out of the mills, as long as the Mayor didn't do any worse than violate gasoline rationing, as long as the mills put out steel and fire funnelled into the sky, then nobody cared much about the rest of it, let it be naked, naked as the hammer and the flame.

And he was, in a way, up against the city. Up against one of its big men, one of its politicians, Stoney Pike.

He began to see something. He began to see the face of the city. Not its actual face, but the people, the figures really important there.

High up was Mr. Osmond.

He stole the patents, he was inviolate, he had millions of dollars, the E pennants flew above his plants, he was heralded as the great production genius of the Pittsburgh area.

Near him, high in the cathedral structure of the city, was Mr. Donnough, of Donnough Bank, rival of Mellon and financier of

Osmond Enterprises. Ron had told him about Mr. Donnough. And there were more men like that, in their niches, high above Pittsburgh.

Then below were men like the Mayor.

Then down below, but still pretty high up, were the judges, the district attorneys, the sheriffs, the whole legal array. But it was the judges who interested him most, he saw them, the dark, pained face of Farjeon, the blue denim eyes and the halo of white hair of Judge Fretz, the bald pate of Handley, into whose court he had stepped for a moment, to see what kind of a guy he was . . . he saw them, but he saw them now in a strange guise, as if they were statues, a panel of statues in the face of the city.

He saw now the face of the Pittsburgh world, the Pittsburgh civilization. Oh yes, there were cathedrals there, and beautiful squares, and nice people, and the captain of police who had done him a good turn. But the cathedral squares and the nice people were not the basic city. The basic city was the mills and the cluster of hovels with the service stars. And the people in control of the civilization were Mr. Osmond, Mr. Donnough, the Mayor, the panel of judges.

And way down below were the people, the ordinary people, like Mr. Witowski and a lot of other steelworkers, who made the weapons, and gave the blood and bought the bonds, and sent their sons and daughters off to war.

Between the guys high up and the guys down below was a middleman, a dealer, named Stoney. He was a dealer in votes. He got them with turkeys, baby shoes, an occasional job. He added to them or subtracted from them by marked ballots, by throwing your vote out. It was great to vote, but Stoney nullified your vote. Your vote did not empower you, it empowered him. He took the votes of the guys down below and gave them to the guys higher up. For which he got privileges. Stoney was an important part of the structure because he delivered 16,000 votes.

As he beheld this structure, Joe thought of something Sylvia MacTavish had said, "The whole thing is rotten, the whole thing has to come down."

He didn't know.

He realized something. He himself was not revolutionary. He didn't want to see the whole structure come down.

But he did want to get Stoney, knock Stoney out of the structure.

How?

And suddenly he had it.

The sixteen thousand people who voted for Stoney, they weren't bad people, they weren't altogether foolish, most of them were decent, hard-working, and honest.

If they knew what Stoney was—Stoney would be through.

Unfortunately, they didn't know. Some of them had read a garbled account in the papers, full of Stell's legs and a midnight walk.

But if they realized Stoney was always laying somebody's wife or daughter, making some woman "come across" so her husband could work, then Stoney would be through.

Now the question was, could he get Stoney's victims to tell?

And if he could pile the Numbers racket on Stoney, and the liquor racket, and the black-market stuff, and other things Bennie and Woolbine had told him about . . . he began to see a process, an actual process to follow.

He would go to these people, to the poor Polish people where the wife or daughter had been put upon by Stoney, Stell would go with him, Stell could talk to them in Polish, they would try to get these people to make a statement, possibly a sworn statement, the statement could be used as evidence.

He wouldn't need the mock trial Sylvia MacTavish had talked about; there would be a real trial.

He began to see it now, something he had always wanted, public humiliation for Stoney. Stoney could be impeached, he could be arrested, jailed, and be tried by the very District Attorney, Lordy O'Leary, who kept shouting he would try Stoney if only he had the right evidence.

Well he, Joe Drew, would get him the evidence. And by God, he'd be able to look himself in the face again.

He'd tell Stell to-morrow.

And filled with a quiet exultation, he went upstairs. Then a thought came to him, he'd tell her now. They had been assigned to different rooms, but—

He entered. She was lying there in the moonlight, her eyes open, looking at him as if she had been waiting for him, as if

hoping he would come . . . there was a reddish glow from the fireplace.

"Sweetheart," he said, sitting on the bed, "I've got it." And he told her how, to get Stoney, they would go to people in Mill District. He told her about the man who had come to Bennie's office screaming "I keel." He told her about the whispered conversations between his father and mother. "Baby, we've got him," he said.

"Oh, Joe, do you think it'll work?"

"Sure, baby," he said, his hands gripping her, trying to shake some of his strength, conviction into her.

"Oh, Joe, if we do, will that make everything all right between us?"

He knew what she meant, but he said, "What do you mean, baby?"

And looking at him, her eyes great and sad in the moonlight, "Joe, you kiss me. You hold me in your arms. But when it comes to . . . you keep away from me. There's something in between."

She was right, there was something in between.

"Joe," she said, "were you hurt in that place?"

He shook his head, no.

"Then what is it? Tell me, Joe."

He hated to tell her. He was as stiff as a board about her when he was away from her. But when he came near, when the sex stuff started, he saw Stoney . . . that was the thing between, the ghost with the oyster eyes.

"There's been a ghost," he said.

And she, looking at him, breathing with him, feeling she knew—"The Squire?"

He nodded, yes, Stoney, the Squire.

"Oh, Joe," she sobbed, "that's so unfair, I fought, I——"

"I know, baby," he said, "I understand." And then, about his own trouble, "Don't you see, that's why I've got to do something about it?"

She nodded, she saw, and wondered what could ever help this poor crippled love . . . and touching his forehead, his face, tears in her eyes, "Joey."

"Listen, sweetheart," he said. "Everything will be all right. If we go out and fight. If I feel we're both in the same fight, together."

And nodding to him, smiling to him, "We're together, Joe."

Something like a bullet, like a sting of triumph tore through his heart. "I love you, baby."

"Oh, Joe," she cried softly, "that's the first time you said it."

He kissed her tears away, he kissed her hair, her throat. He kissed her lips till he felt he was kissing something deep within, as if at the same moment he felt her flesh and her soul . . . suddenly his impulse was there, he fell in beside her, took her in his arms.

And she, feeling that he had returned to himself, thank God, she said. And sank beneath the ecstasy of his embrace.

In the morning Joe told his mother they were leaving. He told her why. He told her in the nicest way he could.

Mrs. Drew was no fool. As she beheld her son, and his tall, happy, beautiful girl, she realized something had happened between them that had helped them. And she realized they had to help themselves, to help their own lives, before they could help her.

She further realized that she might be a help to them. "I'll come down to the city myself," she said, "when I can. Maybe I can give you a hand."

Joe thought of how nice this was, of the trouble and obstacles. "The animals," he said.

"I'll get a neighbour to help."

And when they were all set, ready to go, the baby in his peaked blue cap, Mrs. Drew looking at Joe, Stella, the baby, "Now remember, children, we're a family." And as they parted, "It's been a wonderful Christmas," Mrs. Drew said.

And Stella, in gratitude and humility, "A wonderful Christmas," she said.

CHAPTER IX

THE GATHERING STORM

JOE FACED THE PROPOSITION: How were they going to find out who Stoney's victims were? The man with the "I keel" had disappeared. Stell had an idea. "Let's go to Father Tadeusz,"

she said. "He was awful nice about the baby. And he knows everybody in Mill District."

Joe didn't want to go, but she persuaded him. He found himself looking into the blue, chilly, refined eyes of Father Tadeusz. "I used to know your father," Father Tadeusz said. "I come from a scientific family myself. My brother, Arctowski, is meteorologist, University of Lwow." And he sighed, he hadn't heard from his brother since the German occupation of Lwow.

He touched his slight blond beard, his sharp eyes faced the immediate issue. He had been told what they wanted. And indicating Stella, "You will marry her?" he said.

Joe said yes.

Father Tadeusz nodded. And thinking of Stoney, "There is a lion in the streets of Mill District. The lion has been feeding on the flesh of my people. Am glad," he said, "you are going to pare the lion's claws."

Then he said that he couldn't tell things that had been told him in confessional. But he knew things that hadn't been told him in confessional. He wrote a name and address on a piece of paper. "You go see this girl," he said, "tell her you are from me. Tell her she should talk to you. And do not be impatient if she takes a long time to open the door. Hurt people take a long time opening the door," said he.

Joe and Stella went to see the girl, Mamie Bezeria. As they stood before the door, Joe remembered Father Tadeusz's words, she certainly was slow about opening the door. He was about to give up, knocked again . . . "Who's there?" in a small, childish voice.

"Mamie," said Stella, "Mamie Bezeria, open the door." And Stella began talking in Polish. Her name was Stella Witowski. Father Tadeusz had sent her. She was with a young man, the one she was engaged to. They wanted to talk to her. Father Tadeusz had sent them. "Mamie," said Stella, "open the door."

The door opened, a crack. Beyond the crack was a chain. Beyond the chain was a thin, pale, freckle-faced girl, possibly sixteen. She had pale, frizzy red hair and pale blue eyes. And this was Mamie Bezeria.

"Hello, Mamie," said Stella, affecting a neighbourhood breeziness, "I've seen you."

"Yah," said Mamie, "I've seen you too." And with a gleam in her eye, "Wasn't your picture in the paper?"

"Yes," said Stella, "our picture was in the paper. Mamie, open the door."

Mamie looked at Joe. "Is this the fellah beat up the Squire?"

"Yes," said Stella.

Mamie opened the door.

It was a poor flat, two service stars in the window. "I see you've got people in the Service," Joe said.

And she told him, two brothers in the Navy. He asked where they were—oh, the Pacific. Her father had died years ago. Her mother had passed away last winter. Right before that the brothers had gone into the Navy.

"Mamie," said Stella, "how do you know the Squire?"

And Mamie, with instinctive caution, "Why should I tell?"

"Because," said Joe, "we're going to make trouble for him."

And slowly, despite her hesitancy and fear, Mamie's story came out. She had fallen into the Squire's clutches through a fur coat. She described the coat as it stood in the window. "You know," she said to Stella, "the Dollar Down Fur Company." Stella nodded, she knew. Mamie had bought the coat as part of her attempt to rise in the world. "I thought I'd get a better job. And you know how fellahs look atcha, they look atcha better if you got a fur coat." Stella nodded, she knew.

Mamie described her purchase of the coat, a dollar down, so much per week. "Then Ma took sick. And doctors and medicine cost something awful. With the brothers away, I couldn't keep up with it." She described the mounting expenses. "It was my mother or the coat." She wanted to give the coat back, but the instalment people wouldn't take it. And the contract she had signed said she owed them the money, anyway, even if they did take the coat. They hounded her, they went to the place where she worked, talked to her boss.

Then one night Tommy Nowak, the constable, approached her on the street. He had a paper. "Something legal," she said. Nowak threatened to take the coat off her, right on the street.

"But it's winter," she said, "I ain't got no other coat, give me a chance, I'll pay."

"Pay now," Nowak said.

She said she couldn't, she was going to the drug-store, she needed the money for her mother's medicine. "Ain't there nothing I can do?" she said.

Nowak said yes, they could go talk to the Squire. As she told about it, Mamie started to cry. "I don't wanna say no more," she said. But they persuaded her. She told how the Squire got rid of Nowak. The Squire said if she was "nice" to him, everything would be all right.

"So he did it," she said, "on the couch, in the back room."

Joe and Stella looked at each other, they knew that back room.

The next night Nowak approached her again. She would have to do the same thing for him, or else he would take the coat. After he got through with her, Oddie Simmons and Willie Doodek went for her.

Joe got it, a gang- —. "All of a sudden," Mamie said, "I run outa there. I was screamin'. I don't know what I said. People that was passin' by say I said, 'They did it to me, they did it to me.' That's why," she said to Stella, "I don't go out no more, just when I get awful hungry." And looking down, "I'm so ashamed, I don't go to Father Tadeusz no more."

Stella's great eyes had their torn quality. For the first time in her life she felt something, quite apart from her own flesh and blood, she was a mother. And looking at the poor little thing, pale, sobbing and ashamed, she went to her, put her arm around her. "Now no fellah will look at me," Mamie Bezeria said.

"Yes they will," Stella said, her eyes shining gratefully and lovingly at Joe. "Some day," she whispered to Mamie, "you'll meet the right fellah, and he'll understand." She began to feel something, the triumph of life, that life did have its beauty and hope despite its bitterness.

Joe, standing there, felt a little like a heel for what he was going to say. But he had to go on. "Mamie," he said, "will you go to a notary with us? You see, Mamie, it doesn't do any good unless we have it on paper."

And finally they persuaded her, took her to a notary, got a sworn statement. Then Joe called Bennie. "Bennie," he said, "if a guy lays a girl under the age of consent, is that statutory rape?"

"It is," Bennie said.

They had Stoney. A couple more like this and they had Stoney.

From Sylvia MacTavish they got Katie Kralic. Katie Kralic was a Croatian, a Communist, and a Gold Star Mother. She was

a tall, spare woman with stringy yellow hair, and grey eyes that could have a granite-like glisten. She tried to be matter-of-fact.

Stoney had seen her on the street, during the depression. At that time her husband worked one or two days a week at Three Mile Mill. She worked, to help out. They had a little boy.

Stoney had her fired, had her husband fired. "May God keep you," she said to Joe, "from knowing what it is to have your little boy look at you because he's hungry." Her grey eyes dwelled on the Gold Star in the window. "My little boy died in Italy."

But Katie Kralic was not merely a woman with a story, but a woman of ideas. "Your Mamie Bezeria," she said, "I don't think she's the only one. There's an instalment company racket around here. The company gets the Squire to go after the girls, to squeeze more money out of them. And what do they care if the Squire gets a few girls?"

"Do you know anything definite?" said Joe. She said no, but perhaps she could find out.

And from Woolbine Joe got a method not merely for finding out about the Dollar Down Fur Company, but about Stoney. "I'll get you clips from the morgue," he said. He explained what the morgue was: a large room in a newspaper office, where everything printed in the papers was filed away. "It's against all the rules of newspaperdom," he said, "but every day I'll give you some clips. After you give them back to me, I'll slip you some more. You'll have the man's whole life spread before you," he said, "everything from the big cases that came up before him to his real estate deals."

Now, in Potter's Hotel, the drawings were off the drawing-board, the newspaper clips spread out, Joe studying them, making notes, taking down names. In this manner he was gathering evidence, support. In the morning he made his plan for the day, in the afternoon he and Stell went to see people, stood talking to them, knocking on doors. . . .

But nobody could go around Mill District, talking to people, knocking on doors, without Stoney getting to know about it. He was like a human centipede, with feelers in every block, every tenement. It was impossible that he should not get to know, but strangely, it was from one of his "victims" that he found out.

This was Mrs. Sophie Breslawsky, known to Stoney as "the

Pillow" because she was so soft to lie upon. Nor did she mind being called the Pillow. "Come to the Pillow," she used to say, "come to the Pillow." And her dark Mongoloid eyes gleamed in her powdery, puffy face.

A "nickel show" singer in her youth, Mrs. Sophie Breslawsky was one of those restless, scheming creatures whom life had never satisfied. Sometimes she thought of running a whore-house, she could see herself, dressed in her favourite white, going around slapping the girls, making them lay whether they wanted to or not . . . but her husband had been against it. Then, when she had gotten to know Stoney, she began to see herself in the "politician business." In fact, in her heyday with Stoney she had been almost an assistant Squire, "the Missus-Squire," as she put it. Her husband had been paid off by being made foreman at the mill. But when Stoney tired of her this dignification vanished along with her influence in the "politician business."

As Stoney's visits to her had been undeniable, and as she was no longer a power around the blocks, the neighbourhood gossips said all kinds of things. Mrs. Breslawsky had to invent something to save face. This she did by saying about the Squire, "He forced me."

Not many people believed her; still, you never know, and it became one of the legends of Mill District. Stella had heard about it, and one day when she and Joe were lost in the maze of the Squire's relationship to the Dollar Down Fur Company, they went to see Mrs. Breslawsky.

Mrs. Breslawsky received them with an obvious show of sympathy. And like a smart woman, she wanted to know what she was getting into, what other women did they have . . . aha. And who else? Aha . . . sure, she would come in, why not?

Mrs. Sophie Breslawsky saw the Main Chance. No sooner had she got rid of the fellow and the girl than she put on her favourite white, made up her face to look as if her black eyes had fallen into a sack of flour and hurried over to talk to Stoney.

"Stone," she said, "you're in trouble." And she told him, they had taken Mamie Bezeria to a notary.

Jesus Christ, a notary.

"And that ain't all," she said, "they been to Katie Kralic."

Good God, Katie Kralic, the Gold Star Mother!

"Don't you see," Mrs. Breslawsky said, watching his cold, set

face, "don't you see they're after you, don't you see what they got?"

Stone nodded, he saw.

"Stone," she said, "why did it have to be young girls? And women who didn't wanna? What did they go for you that I couldn't do?"

But waving all that aside, "Listen," he said, "you go back there, see what you can find out."

Finally, he was rid of her. Good God, Mamie Bezeria, Katie Kralic. And Katie Kralic was the worst. He saw her, her white face, a pure woman he had defiled. And she hated him, she had lost her husband because of him. And her little boy, the little boy he had had such a hard time getting out of the house, her little boy had died in Italy. And she would stand against him. The hell of this case was it was so much like the Polack girl's case.

Whew! He had things to do.

He sent for his lieutenants. They stood before him, Tommy Nowak, Greeny Murowski, Oddie Simmons, Willie Doodek. Good grief, what a crew. And he was tied to them. Their crimes were his crimes. All the girls they tortured for the Dollar Down Fur Company, the girls they had jumped in the back room, after he had them first—

"Listen, fellahs," he said, "the heat's on. Mamie Bezeria has talked." They looked at each other, remembering the gang——. "Now listen, fellahs," he said, "from now on it's all for one and one for all." And to Greeny Murowski and Tommy Nowak, "The first thing is to dump the rackets." They looked solemn, nodded. He waved them on their way.

Then he thought of something. If it came to the worst, they could claim Mamie Bezeria was light in the head, or had done it for money. But Katie Kralic—not only was she a Gold Star Mother, but she worked in a shipyard, made fifty-sixty dollars a week. They were hard to handle when they made dough.

Still, there was no help for it, he reached for his hat, and in the twilight of Mill District, went and hung outside Katie Kralic's house, waiting for her to come home . . . and there she was.

"Katie," he began, "I want to talk to you."

Shut up, you monster, she wanted to say. But she held it. Her grey eyes were upon him, she saw his own grey eyes, like oysters, a sickly pearl glowing in the centre as he appealed to her: what's

been has been, why can't we be friends? She thought of her husband, gone. Her boy, gone. All gone but her pride, her feeling that in spirit she never gave in. "Stoney Pike," she said, "it's time somebody did something about you." And looking into his scraggly face as it froze into its hawkish indomitable lines, "Stoney Pike," she said, "your day has come." And she turned into the house.

Your day has come. Well, perhaps it had. The night was closing in on him, on Mill District, in all its starkness, sordidness, power, the mills with their halo of flame against the sky.

Well, he had one more chance. For Mamie Bezeria, Katie Kralic, hadn't started this thing. The trouble was the boy, the Marine. He was the instigator, the ringleader. Naturally he wanted to free himself. O.K., he could go free. If only he would call off his dogs.

And looking at the mills, funnelling into the sky, feeling he had contributed to them, feeling their might and power, he welded something of himself to their crude magnificence, to their eternal flame. He felt better now, stronger. While there's life, said Stone, there's hope.

He stepped into a phone booth, and without giving much of himself away, called Bennie's office, found out where Joe Drew lived.

Fine, he'd see him in the morning.

It was morning. Joe was at his drawing-board. The clippings were spread before him, a list of names of girls hounded by the Dollar Down Fur Company. There were a few more things on the drawing-board, bits of steel, for now, feeling himself getting out of the fog, he was working on his fog-cutter again, beginning to put it together. Sometimes he used its parts as paperweights for his clippings and notes.

There was a knock at the door and, in his usual absorbed manner, Joe said, "Come in."

And Stoney Pike came in. He stood, tall, hawkish, stooped, his eyes unflinching. He did not smile or say hello. And looking at his antagonist, "What do you want?" he said.

I want to finish you, Joe said, but to himself.

"Come on," said Stoney, "you lay off me, and I'll drop the charges, or something. You can get out of it."

I'm getting out of it, Joe thought, in my own way.

Jesus Christ, thought Stoney, he don't speak. "Listen," he said, "what is it, money? You can have money," he said, "or a life job." He could get him the job, if this guy didn't make matters worse . . . he saw now the clippings on the board, some with pictures of himself, his Christmas distributions, people who had been brought before him. Where did he get them? He knew what this was, this was the gathering storm. Jesus Christ, he said to himself, my whole life is in his hands. "Come on, kid," he said, "just say what you want, and I'll give it to you." He thought of the girl. "And I'll say I'm sorry."

It's too late for that, Joe thought.

"I'll give you whatever you say," Stoney said. "I give up, let's get together."

Joe thought of something. It was in the early days on Guadal. A Jap had come to him that way, arms up, saying he'd give up. He thought he'd take a prisoner back for questioning, nodded. Suddenly the Jap bent down, there was a machine gun strapped to his back. A couple more Japs jumped out of the bushes, started to mow 'em down. That's the way they lost Skinny, the Greek. Of course, Stoney wasn't a Jap, but in some ways he was worse than a Jap. A Jap was sometimes a dumb guy they filled full of rice and *bushido*, and told to go out and die. But Stoney was a smart man. He knew what he was doing.

A thought occurred to him, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." But suppose they knew what they were doing?

He thought of something else. All over the world, in Italy, in Germany, in the islands of Japan, fascism was going down, and our guys were putting it down. What was sacred about it in Pittsburgh?

"Can't we do business?" Stoney said.

"No, we can't do business," Joe said. He got up from his drawing-board, and indicated the door. "That's it," he said. And Stoney went.

Joe felt no elation. If anybody had told him a few days ago that Stoney would have come to him, he would have been much surprised. He had vaguely thought of such a meeting, not only with elation but with an inner shake. But he felt nothing of the sort now.

It was like when they had been soldiering. They had enfiladed

those Japs. He had looked forward to that too. But when it all happened, it was just a job to be done. And that was what Stoney was, just a job to be done.

When Stoney left Joe Drew, he had an impulse to flee. He thought of Mexico, South America, Canada.

But what would he do there, what would he be? Just an old man, living off income, pandering to his passions, pursuits. He looked at the river, the steel company barges going up and down, the names of steel kings on them, steel kings he had known. He looked at the far reach of the mills, the endless stacks, and the smog (smoke and fog) of the Pittsburgh sky. These were his rivers, he knew their every twist and bend, from the days when he was a riverman. These were his mills, he had worked in them, and he had, in his way, helped them and preserved them.

Over yonder, through the smog, were the flames of Mill District, its smoke stacks like a flaming forest in the sky. It was his kingdom. That is, Osmond had the mills, but he had everything else, the people, the votes, the drunks he locked up Saturday night, the Numbers racket, all the other rackets, his link with the Organization, some of the judges (when he wasn't in trouble) . . . it was his, his kingdom. A kingdom of evil, to some people, but his kingdom nonetheless. Why should he give it up, for what, for this fool boy, or some girls he had laid? It was his right, as much his right as in the old days the German barons had the right of first night.

It was his, he wasn't going to give it up.

But there was no doubt about one thing, the boy was getting himself out of it. He saw something, if this kept up, the boy would be out, and he would be in.

I want out, Stoney said to himself.

Now there was only one way. The boy was a fool, he didn't want money, or a life job, he wanted to gather the gathering storm, to have all those dames troop into court and lift up their skirts or their fur coats, and instead of a fig leaf, the boy had a label he stuck on it: justice.

He was wise to guys like that, reformers and such. And he had a method, an old method, the method he had used on the Honest Mayor . . . Stoney's thoughts took him back to a man who had been Mayor of Pittsburgh, so honest they had to get rid of him.

Which they did, by very nearly running him down with trucks, not that the man himself was afraid, but after they very nearly ran him down, they would call Mrs. Donald on the telephone and say, "Well, Mrs. Donald, we nearly got Angus that time."

Angus Donald, the Honest Mayor, people had said he might be senator, President maybe. But when his wife suffered a nervous breakdown, through trucks and telephone calls, in order to save her life Angus Donald quit.

But this case was different. This had to be done fast. And fortunately, from Prohibition days, from his days of the black market in meats, from his Christmas distributions, he had the right truckers. As a matter of fact, the guy's name was Joe, Joe Voinich & Company, Truckers. Joe, meet Joe.

So it happened that Joe, leaving Potter's Hotel, noticed a large van chugging in the alley, and a man with dark eyes and a drooping lip, not exactly hanging over the wheel, but almost crouching there, observing him. Joe had been alerted since Stoney's visit, he felt Stoney would pull something, and now, stepping forward, ready to swivel sideways, suddenly he felt the truck going for him. He managed to get away. He told Stell about it, asked her to stay with him, as an observer.

"My God, Joe," she said, "you don't think——?"

He nodded, it was possible.

That night in the mist, as he was turning in, having taken Stell home, out of no place, without lights, suddenly swerving at him, came the truck. And having been up against tanks, rather than fall away from it and give it a clear path at him, he jumped at it, travelling with it, managing to get his hands on it, till the trucker began clubbing his hands off. He fell, but as he fell he hurled himself across the sidewalk.

He lay there, feeling his leg, his bad leg. He managed to crawl into the hotel, was helped to his room, called Bennie and Stell. "I'll be right over with a doctor," Bennie said.

And as Stell burst in, "Oh, Joe, why weren't you careful?" she said. And her face showed such pain, her eyes accusing him and loving him, that he couldn't help but smile. It was so much the way Mom used to be about Pop.

Bennie and the doctor arrived, the doctor feeling the now swollen ankle, insisting he be put to bed. Fortunately, there were no bones broken. It might be a torn ligament or a sprain, he

suggested compresses, that the leg be put up, all of which made Joe angry-eyed and annoyed, but somehow, he saw, made Stell happy. She was having all the tender, painful fun of being a missus, helping undress him, slipping pyjamas on him, the doctor and Bennie looking on, both understanding, she was the one . . . and now, as the doctor went, saying he'd be back in the morning, she sat by his bed and he told Bennie all about it.

Bennie thought. The city, and his deep knowledge of it, of politics, vice, crime. He saw the thin, spry, genteel face of the Honest Mayor. "It couldn't be a green truck?" he said. Joe nodded. "With a guy with a bad eye and a droopy lip?" Joe nodded. "Voinich," Bennie said. He went to the telephone, called the Squire. "Listen, Squire," he said, "I wouldn't be running my boy down, if I was you. Like you did the Honest Mayor. And tell Voinich I'm sorry I got him that parole." He hung up. "I guess that'll hold him."

Then he had an idea, went to the phone, called the Honest Mayor, told him the whole story. "Mayor," he said (he would always call him Mayor), "I wonder if you would help us out. I don't know what you could hang on Stoney. But I know you could help us." And Angus Donald said he would.

Then Bennie had another idea. He was rather ashamed. He had quit, and the boy had started winning his own case. He remembered the time he sat in his office, in a blue fog, wondering what the hell to do. Now the fog-cutter, the Marine, was showing the way. Like all the world, he loved a winner. And now that this case was clicking, he was clicking too. He went to the phone, called Ned Woolbine. "Listen, Ned," he said, "they tried to run our fellah down. Yes, Joe Drew. Same thing they pulled on the Honest Mayor. Now, Ned, give us a play, will you? We go into court in a coupla days."

And Woolbine gave them a play. It was strange, he thought, how much you could make of a story if you kept it a running story. But this time he needed a new twist, and in lush journalese he invented the Phantom, lurking in the mist, crouched over the wheel, trying to run down the Marine, the Marine who was battling Stoney Pike. And he connected the Phantom with what had happened to the Honest Mayor.

As the paper went on the streets, "Newsboy" Bennie Jordan took his client, his limping client and the client's girl, and the

evidence the boy and girl had gathered, and went to see Lordy O'Leary.

It was the day Joe Drew was to come up for sentence.

With him, as he limped into Judge Fretz's court, were Ben Jordan, Lordy O'Leary, Ned Woolbine.

They stood before Judge Fretz's bench, the accused, the attorney for the defence, the prosecutor, the newspaperman. There was no jury, no spectators, only the few court attendants, amongst them Titus Jones looking on with a malignant, somewhat shamed eye.

Up on the bench sat Judge Fretz, his blue denim eyes with a vague glance of recognition. He nodded, they could proceed.

Lordy spoke first. "Your Honour," he said, "in the case of the People *versus* Joe Drew— Your Honour will remember the case?"

Judge Fretz couldn't help thinking of all the trouble it was. To himself: Will I ever forget it?

Lordy O'Leary went on. "Your Honour," he said, the horn-rimmed glasses down on his sour nose, his thoughtful eyes looking up at the Judge, "Your Honour," he said, "I prosecuted this young man." He indicated Joe. "I had certain misgivings at the time, but there was nothing I could do but follow the evidence and do my duty as I saw it."

Judge Fretz's eyes seemed to say: now what?

"Your Honour," said Lordy, "since that time, very recently—in fact, only yesterday—certain evidence has come into my hand." He had a solemn, lumpy look, as if made solemn and lumpy by the new evidence stuffed into him. "Your Honour," he said, "this evidence indicates that every word this young man" (indicating Joe) "uttered at the trial was true. This evidence indicates that the Squire, Squire Pike, committed acts of a serious nature, charged at the trial. Your Honour will understand," Lordy said, "that I never expected to come here and say any such thing, but I feel I must."

By God, he was saying to himself, I will be damned if I will be a tool of a dirty, filthy, low, crooked Squire. I may be an appointee, but, by the ever-loving Christ, for once the appointee will be a man. And maybe, he was saying to himself, a bigger man.

Lordy went on. "Your Honour," he said, "I am going before

the Grand Jury with this evidence" (waving various affidavits and statements) "and I am going to ask the indictment of Squire Pike on a number of counts."

Jesus, thought Woolbine, this was a story. For once, fighting for the right was going to pay off. He looked at the solemn, unflinching Lordy, now bluntly addressing himself to Judge Fretz.

"Your Honour," Lordy was saying, "in my opinion, the Grand Jury will vote the indictments I ask for."

The Judge was thinking. This case seemed to be the unravelled skein of care. When, when would it end? Kicking Judge Farjeon out, the *presidium preventatorum* of the judges (the inevitable *cordon sanitaire*, he was saying to himself)—all in vain. And the young man, the soldier, without his uniform, limping into court, shifting the weight from his bad foot, supposedly run down by the Phantom as Woolbine's newspaper said. And his own son Luthe, in whom the case had awakened a little spark of feeling, some interest in life.

"Under the circumstances, Your Honour," Lordy was saying, "I wonder if Your Honour would want to pass sentence at this time? I am the prosecutor and I seem to be speaking for the defence. But I am an officer of this court, and I feel justice must be done."

And Judge Fretz, looking at Lordy, "What do you want me to do?"

Lordy had a simple solution. "Would Your Honour stay sentence for another thirty days?"

There was nothing else the Judge could sensibly do. He looked at the tall, dark, young man, the inventor's son, the Marine from the beaches of Guadalcanal, whom he had come down on once . . . he found there was nothing else he wanted to do. "Stay granted," he said.

And Bennie, "Your Honour, may the defendant again be remanded to my care?"

Judge Fretz merely looked at him. Why be harsh now? He nodded, yes, he would give the young man into the lawyer's care.

Joe breathed. He felt himself breathing. He was free again for thirty days. But he felt he would be free for a good long time.

Lordy went before the Grand Jury. With him he had quite a processional, Stella Witowski, Mamie Bezeria, Katie Kralic, some

girls Stoney had hounded and trapped through the Dollar Down Fur Company, some men and women who had been fired rather mysteriously, to whom odd things had happened. And shepherding the processional, a priest, a Polish priest, Father Tadeusz. And a man who was of very considerable importance in the world of invention and finance, Folette LeClerq, inventor of the LeClerq De-icer and other things of the air, and one of Pop's old friends. Mom had been down to town, gotten LeClerq to agree to testify, at least back the case up with his magnificent presence. And Angus Donald was there. And the man who had come into Bennie's office screaming, "I keel" . . . Joe had been unable to find him, but Lordy, with the machinery of the law, threw out a dragnet through the steel cities, Youngstown, Ambridge, Bessemer, Aliquippa, came up with a man scorched by life and by the flames of the mills and by the flames of a dreadful memory, still desirous of telling why he had gone through the streets of Pittsburgh screaming, "I keel."

A Grand Jury is somewhat different from a trial jury. It is, in its inherent nature, responsive to the District Attorney. The District Attorney goes before it, tells what the evidence is, he has the witnesses tell their stories to the Grand Jury. Then the District Attorney faces the Grand Jury and says, "You have enough evidence to indict." If the evidence is but a smattering of evidence, usually the Grand Jury will indict. But in this case there was no smattering, the evidence was overwhelming, so much so that Lordy deliberately played it down. He did not wish to pull all the tremolo stops now. He expected some day to have all this up before a court and jury that would send Stoney away. Now he merely said, "You have the evidence to indict."

And the Grand Jury indicted.

Whatever this moment was to Joe Drew who had brought it about, to Lordy, to Stella who told her story, to Mamie Bezeria, Katie Kralic, and the rest, it was in a way more to Woolbine than to anyone else. And in his more serious nature, in the novelist he felt was buried deep within him, there was the secret of why this moment meant more to him. For he could do something about it. All the rest could stand on their laurels, their anger, hate, tears, but he had work to do. For once he had a story that could tear into the vitals, the consciousness, the desire for sensation of the body politic. And with his inside track on the whole case, with

most of the story prepared the day before, he could score a scoop.

The *Clarion* was first on the street with the story, its great banner headline screaming:

SQUIRE PIKE INDICTED

GRAND JURY RETURNS TRUE BILL
SQUIRE INDICTED ON 21 COUNTS

*Was Colourful Figure, Long ran
Mill District*

Written Especially for the *Clarion*
by Ned Woolbine

FLASH: The Grand Jury, in record time, indicted Squire J. Stoneham Pike to-day,
How the mighty are fallen!

Yesterday, King of Mill District, to-day J. Stoneham Pike, more popularly known as "Stoney" Pike, is under indictment on 21 counts, charged with everything from statutory rape to selling ration stamps. The latter may be a Federal offence.

IMPEACHMENT LOOMS

Lordy O'Leary, reached late to-day, said, "You can quote me as saying Stoney Pike will be impeached. His days of being a big shot, of being 'The Untouchable,' are over."

WAS KING OF MILL DISTRICT

Thousands of tales are told about "Stoney" Pike, for over a quarter of a century the man who owned Mill District, body and soul, and delivered it to the Organization, lock, stock and barrel. But according to rumours there, Stoney is through, his passing regarded as a "lead-pipe cinch."

So, in lush newspaper parlance, interspersed with lively Pittsburghese, Ned Woolbine wrote the story, conscious of its gutter appeal, conscious that it had to have gutter appeal, that the common ordinary citizenry of Pittsburgh had to be roused out of its usual weary indifference in order to sit up and take notice.

But this story to him was not his victory. His victory as he

walked home, after the day's work, was the sight of the headlines of other papers, headlines he felt he had forced because of his work on this case. People were buying the papers, stopping to read and look at the pictures of girls trapped by Stoney and the Dollar Down Fur Company, pictures of Stella and the Marine, pictures of Stoney, Stoney leading political parades, Stoney handing out turkeys, and a "death-house camera" picture of Stoney, taken some time ago. This "death-house camera" was a device that could not be seen, the lens behind the buttonhole of the reporter's coat, the bulb in his pocket, the kind of camera used to get death-house pictures that weren't supposed to be taken. The picture showed Stoney tipling on the bench.

And with it the caption: "Here's how Stoney Swigged in Court. (Notice Bottle in Inner Coat Pocket.)"

Yes, thought Woolbine, the day of one rascal was over. He himself, like many a newspaperman, revelled in all this as much as he hated it. Still, there was some good to it. He thought of something Stella Witowski had said to Joe after the indictments had been voted. "Gee, Joe," she said, "we can make trouble for a Squire."

And Joe, smiling at her, "Sure, baby," he said, "that's what's great about the United States."

It was, thought Woolbine, if only more people voted, more people cared, if only citizenship and decency came alive and stayed alive . . . and so, thinking this and that, he walked home.

CHAPTER X

STONEY AT THE POINT

"SQUIRE PIKE INDICTED." The paper lay on Stoney's desk. He stared at the headline. It was smeary. The whole front page was smeary, the letters seeming to jitter off into a smear. Like his life.

Indicted on 21 counts. Why not 22, or 23—skiddoo? If they had come to him and asked him, and if he had wanted to, he could have told them something. He had had a life.

And maybe that life was over. Again he thought of running

away. He realized something now, he was likely to think of it a good many times before the thing was over. But in his basic nature he knew he wouldn't go, he wouldn't give up without a fight.

He could go to the Organization, to Mr. Hilder, flaunt his 16,000 votes. But ever since the trial, the Organization had shunned him like a plague. And if this newspaper stuff kept up, he wouldn't have any 16,000 votes. No, he couldn't go to them now. His bag of tricks was gone, expended on kicking out Farjeon. If he came out of this, he could probably be a big man again. If he didn't come out, the judges and the Organization would drape themselves in civic virtue, he would be the stinkpot at which they would hold the nose.

He thought of going to Lordy, making him promises, but what could he do for Lordy now? Lordy, the Irish Catholic sonofabitch, had said at the trial he would prosecute if he had anything to prosecute on. Well, they had given it to him. He saw another thing. This was Lordy's chance, the chance of the appointee. You didn't have to be a political guy to make capital out of a case like this. Lordy could drape himself in civic virtue and the American flag, talk about all those poor innocent people whose champion he had become, he could make himself District Attorney, Governor even. Think of it, the Hon. Lordy O'Leary, Governor.

Stone shook it off. There wasn't a bit of business in his court. Naturally, people shunned him. But his crew was there, Nowak, Pstalski and the rest of them, hanging out in the court, knowing he wanted to be by himself in the back room. What he was waiting for he didn't know. And why they hadn't come to get him, he didn't know. He thought of going over to the D.A.'s office, giving himself up. And then—let them come and get me, he said to himself.

Anyway, he couldn't stay here. Not in this miserable back room with that miserable couch on which he had laid all those dames, that black couch looming like a coffin now. He got up, picked up his long, black, frayed coat, his "iron hat." And with his face stiff, set, indomitable, stalked through the empty court, paying no heed to the worried, questioning faces of his gang, marched out on to the street.

Stone had no notion of where he wanted to go. He felt now for the first time a man alone, against the city. Nor did he much

wish to be observed, recognized by the many he knew. Instead of turning toward Mill District, as he usually did, he turned toward down-town.

It was a strange day. As he approached the down-town district, the back shed of Pennsylvania Station loomed like a prehistoric monster in the mist. For the black smog was upon the city to-day. This was not only the smoke and mist of smog, but the soot of soft coal filtering down through the smog, blending with it, turning the unearthly day into a grey, webby blanket of unearthly night.

All fear of recognition was gone. No one could see him, distinguish him, any more than he could distinguish them. The people of Pittsburgh to-day were like lost souls, wandering in a purgatory of black smog, without faces, without identity, only murky forms in a watery, black, unbelievable mist. The only things distinguishable were the dominant names, legends, of a civilization, their electric-lighted persistence glowing feebly through the mist: THE PITTSBURGH STORE, GINGER ROGERS, LOEW'S STATE, and a sign, in competition with all this: BUY WAR BONDS.

Perhaps by some instinct, perhaps feeling for the breath of some other kind of life, the very feet of Stone, without his much thinking about it, found their way to the Point. This was the little point of land, the tip of Pittsburgh, where the Monongahela meets the Allegheny and forms the Ohio.

Stone stood at the Point. How many times he had passed it in his life as a riverman, that big, clean life, in the days when he had taken iron and coke and coal down the river to the mills. There was a barge down below, through the sooty mist, a barge that lay cracked and rotting there. It had been tied up there for quite some time, he had seen it before, but never as now, its cracked and rotted quality through the black smog, did it seem as the barge of his own life.

There was a form on the barge, an old riverman who lived there, he had seen him before. The man loomed now through the smog and the black mist, saying nothing, not even aware of his presence. But as the man stood there, looking up, just a thickened concentration of black smog, his whole smudgy figure seemed to be saying something. Stone, he seemed to be saying, why did you do it? Why didn't you stay with us? Why didn't you be a clean, decent man? You had the river, everybody liked you, all up and down the whole Allegheny . . . the man went below.

And indeed, Stone thought, why had he done it? Well, the city had interested him, the people, the lights. And the dream of Blackstone, the people's advocate he was going to become. He had dreamed of hounding scoundrels like himself out of office. Now why had he done it, why had he double-crossed himself?

He put it on Mace, his wife Mace. And Mr. Osmond. They were the two evil geniuses of his life. Mace, in her shambling, gipsy way, not meaning to be. But what the hell does it matter, if you love a woman and trust a woman, and it goes wrong, and she didn't mean it that way? Maybe she didn't, it didn't matter, except that she didn't quite know what she was doing. But Mr. Osmond did.

Now, in his agony, the thought of his troubles eating at him like a corrosive acid, the surface crud of Stoney, all the cheap jokes and the cheap illusions, fell away. And he saw himself, for the first time in his life, naked. And words came to him, the words of a demented and beautiful woman he had known who, as the demented sometimes do, came up with something. "You too," she said, "must one day stand naked in the universe."

Brother, I am there.

He thought of his wife, Mace. And how he had met and married her. He had been a clean man then, Squire for the first time. Men were saying he could be Mayor, Governor even.

Then the Anarchist came into Mill District. And started preaching anarchism. Said the mill people were slaves, slaves of Mr. Osmond, the Churches, the Law.

Well, with one thing and another, the Anarchist holding meetings around Mill District, his picture in the papers, he attracted Mace's attention, she started going to his meetings.

Well, one night she brought the Anarchist up. He was a good-looking enough fellow, nervous, clean, threadbare linen, a Windsor tie, and inclined to violent language. He could handle him all right. But after the fellow was gone, "Mace," he said, "I don't think you'd better bring that fellow up here any more."

She looked at him with her dark little freebooter eyes. "Do you mind," she said, "if I meet him elsewhere?"

"You got plans to meet him?"

And thinking about it, standing there, letting down her black hair, "If he wants to meet me," she said.

Mace was one of those creatures with a perverse honesty that

meant more to her than anything else. And Mace was a square-shooter, if she was up to anything, she'd let you know. So he wasn't worried, only, "What do you see in the fellow?" he said.

She looked off thoughtfully, as if she herself wanted to know. "I don't know," she said; "maybe I'm looking for a friend." And she told him the Anarchist talked to her about Walt Whitman, Bliss Carman, he had given her a little book, *The Song of the Open Road*. It was funny, he thought, the guy being poetic for all his violent language.

Mace was looking at him, as if putting him on trial before her. Be big, she seemed to say. That was his first mistake, trying to be big about something he didn't feel big about.

Then Mr. Osmond sent for him. Flinders (Ralph Flinders, the Anarchist's name was) was raising hell with the labouring people of Mill District, and Mr. Osmond was sick of it. Mr. Osmond wasn't as big in those days as he was now, that was the time he was trying to put Three Mile Mill together. "That man," he said, "is throwing a monkey wrench into my machinery." And those sandy eyes seemed to say: do something about it.

"What," Stoney said, "would you want me to do?"

"Lock him up."

He didn't like it. "What's the charges?"

Mr. Osmond almost smiled. "I don't know," he said; "you're the Squire, it's up to you."

He didn't like it, didn't like the whole thing. The "liberty and justice for all" were hanging in the balance here. Flinders hadn't said anything Tom Jefferson hadn't said. If he were the big man, the people's advocate he hoped to be, this was just the kind of case he would have gone for, free speech, that sort of thing.

But election was coming, and without Mr. Osmond's backing there was no hope. And if he wasn't Squire, what would he be? Maybe he could struggle up, go back to the mills, keep on studying nights, but it was a long, hard way. He knew, in this moment, he was selling himself. And annoyed with Flinders, annoyed with Mr. Osmond, annoyed with Mace, feeling deserted and betrayed by something within himself, he cooked the charge.

Flinders was arrested and handed over to Delehanty, who was only a sergeant then, but known as Osmond's man. And the flood waters started to rise, as they did in River House. And Delehanty covered himself with glory, evacuating prisoners. But there was

one prisoner he didn't save, the Anarchist in Number 3 cell. The Anarchist's body was found washed up, some miles away. Therefore Delehanty must have got him out of his cell. Why didn't he save him? And it was strange, how rapid Delehanty's rise was after that. He didn't know, there were some mysteries of the city even he didn't know.

One thing he knew. After the Anarchist was gone, Mace took to drink. She had fallen in love with him after he died. And one night, the bottle in her hand, her eyes oscillating, "You killed him," she said.

And Mr. Osmond sent for him. There was one thing about Mr. Osmond, he knew how to be nice. He received him in a courtly way, with a certain sympathy in his sandy, gold-flecked eyes. He seemed to be saying: I understand you, Pike, I know you're not any old Squire, you've read Blackstone. "Squire," he said, "there's an election coming on, I'd like to back you. But I think you have to make up your mind whether you're going one way or the other." And taking him to the window, Mr. Osmond was taking him to the highest mountain, showing him Mill District . . . the lights of Mill District out there, the lights going up in the saloons, the box of the incline obliterating, momentarily, the cross of the church steeple, as the box swayed on its way . . . oh, he knew this Mill District, the saloons, the houses of prostitution, the other ways he could make money out of it. Election was coming on, he could be Squire. Only he had to say yes, right now. "I've got the mills, you can have Mill District," Mr. Osmond said.

And having sold himself, he began to sell others. What was life, anyway? Money was all they went on about, the Golden Calf ruled in the market-place, and he started to go after money. And not just the money, but power, power over people.

He started an illegal trading in arms and legs. That was before the compensation laws. When a guy lost an arm or a leg in the mill, he sent a crooked lawyer to him, but he himself made the deal with Mr. Osmond's legal department. And instead of Nick, Vasselich, or Tomaso getting 100 per cent. for the leg, they got half the money, the lawyer got a small cut, he got the rest. And the mill was satisfied, this kept things running, cheap and quiet, with the bad old machinery, and no safety devices they might otherwise have to install.

When Prohibition came, he played that. Broke strikes, locked agitators up. And you know how it is, in the life of crime, from one thing you go to the next. Life had become a butcher shop, with arms and legs and the bodies of girls. He knew now why he needed girls; they were narcotics. For a little while they made him forget. And like most people in crime, he needed narcotics. First girls, then married women, then under-age girls, then Polack meat, Bohunk meat, and life was a butcher shop. And with it, with his despair about people, with his growing cynicism about human life, having injured people so deeply, naturally he had to say to himself that they were no good, that they didn't amount to anything, that they didn't have souls, that their efforts and their belief in God or some kind of redemption was foolish, they were nothing but dumb Zombies that had to be pushed, ordered, led—and, of course, he had taken to fascism. And what did it matter if he knocked over one more Polack girl?

Only, unfortunately, there was a strain of individualism in the American people. There were some of them who just wouldn't take it. Such a one was the Marine, who had stood over him in court, shouting at him, nailing him. The Marine, he was the source of all the trouble, the Marine. He should have got him.

But it was too late for that.

Stoney now faced the issue: how could he save himself? Should he run away?

He saw the headlines which didn't yet exist: SQUIRE FUGITIVE. No.

He thought of something now. He had never been able to come out very openly about his fascism in Mill District, he had had to be its flesh-eating soul. But now, why not come out with it? The Bund was starting up again, he knew. America First (Germany First, he said to himself) was going stronger than ever. Maybe he could get those elements to help him. He knew something from their "literature" which he got at the house. There was a new cry now whenever a Jew turned up something that was unfortunate for them; because it was true, they shouted that they were being persecuted by the "Jewish Gestapo." Maybe he could say Bennie was part of the Jewish Gestapo. And as for Lordy O'Leary, the Irish Catholic sonofabitch, there was still plenty of Klan feeling in western Pennsylvania; maybe the time had come for him to come out in the open, claim political persecution, band himself together with these various groups.

Then he saw it was nonsense. It might work some day, but not now. There was only one man that could save him. Not the Judge, not the Organization, but the big man of Pittsburgh, Mr. Osmond, who sat on high, on top of his complicated enterprises, Three Mile Mill, Osmond Aeronautical, Osmond International, and Osmond God-knows-what.

He could go to him. You made me, he could say. And I made you. I bought off the arms and legs, I broke the strikes, I locked up the agitators, I delivered Mill District to you, body and soul. Yes, Osmond, I've been your creature, I've been your man, I've sold my immortal soul to you. And you made the millions, and I made the nickels, and got paid off in cheap little lays. Yes, Osmond, you're Three Mile Mill, and Osmond Research, and Osmond New Metals, the E flags fly over your plants, and the flames of your furnaces belch into the sky. But I stole the inventions for you, I did the dirty work . . . you're the great big sonofabitch, the power of Pittsburgh, the "Genius of War Production," as they say, you've got the judges and the Organization, and the Congressmen and the International connections, and by Jesus Christ, you're going to get me out of this.

Because, Osmond, I can tell. I was afraid of those indictments, but I'm not afraid now. The indictments can bring me to trial, but a trial means I have a right to defence. I can go on the stand, and by God, Osmond, I'll tell. And you can't stand it, you've got too much pride, you're too big, you keep on taking pages in the newspapers, and drawing air maps, and telling how you're going to fix the post-war world, with your air bases in China and Siberia. Well, Osmond, it will all fall apart like a bubble, unless you save me.

Standing at the Point, looking at the forest of smoke-stacks burning in the Pittsburgh sky, Stoney now felt like a Samson. Only instead of standing amidst the pillars of a puny little temple, he felt he stood amidst the mighty industrial plants, each smoke stack like a pillar. And his own feet planted down in the mud and sand of the mill floor, where he had stood before, right down in the mud and sand of America, and in his hands, dynamite, the dynamite of undeniable truth that would rock Pittsburgh, the United States, split Three Mile Mill, Osmond Aeronautical, Osmond International wide open.

The wind shifted, the black smog started to roll back upon

the city. Stoney took a deep, clean breath, and the barge and the bargeman down below that might have been the barge and bargeman ferrying him over the Styx, it was merely a goddam bargeman with a cracked and rotting barge.

Stoney smiled. He was again old Stone, the Commander. And for once in his life, he was not going to talk to Mr. Osmond with any deference. "Osmond," he would say, "your day has come. You get me out of this, or else."

And so, feeling his strength and power come back to him, Stoney turned his face to the face of the city, and started on his way.

CHAPTER XI

STONEY PIKE AND MR. OSMOND

THE MAN STONEY HAD elected to save him did not expect to be Stoney's saviour, or anyone else's. But he was perfectly aware that Stoney might come to him, for he was a very aware man. His awareness straddled the globe, made him wish they would hurry up in the Pacific, for he wanted the Fushan Coal Mines with their cheap Chinese labour. But the centre of his awareness never left Mill District, for it was the heart of his industrial empire.

Eugene Osmond regarded himself as a king. But not a foolish king. He had known foolish kings, Alfonso of Spain, Carol of Rumania, and they had lost their thrones. Because they had kept their minds on the pleasures of Paris instead of what went on in the back alleys of Madrid and Bucharest. But he, Eugene Osmond, no matter how far flung his ambitions, kept something of himself extremely sensitive to Mill District. And some day, if he did come into the coal mines of Manchuria, it would be because he had run things properly in Mill District.

That was why, years ago, he had selected a certain man, then the proper kind of man, to run Mill District for him. That was also why he had the Judge on the Pittsburgh bench. The Judge often thought of himself as a much bigger man, the Judge thought he understood *Weltpolitik*, and he did, and in some respects he could have been a bigger man. But he, Eugene Osmond, wanted

him on the Pittsburgh bench. In the same way there was a man who had once worked for him, been a millworker, Sam McRae. But he had seen something in Sam that fitted him to be in Congress, and Sam was now in Congress and would have a lot to say about the Peace.

Long ago, Mr. Osmond had discovered something about human life; either you ran things, or other people ran you. And he had decided to run things. And had quite a run. Now this foolish case, a Marine, a Squire, and a Polish girl, was again in the papers, with its innuendoes about the mill. Mr. Osmond wished for the tenth time that the boy had come to him. He could have straightened all this out. And he wanted to talk to the boy, son of the old inventor, the pal, by chance, of his own son Ron. . . . Dear Ron, Ronnie, why did you have to do it, why did you have to go away, why did you have to believe all those foolish, charming things? So Mr. Osmond made his obeisance every day, many times a day, to his son, the only thing he had ever loved.

For Mr. Osmond was not a lover. It was to him foolish. The lovers, he thought, always took a second place. For instance, the Judge. The whole thing was silly, to give your life, your identity, your strength, to a woman. It was nonsense, the game of fools and lesser people. His own wife, to him the most beautiful of the sisters Vignon, the blonde sister, was a soft, lovely, yearning thing, fated to give her beauty and her love and her money to some man. He had been the man. And he had been faithful, devoted. And she had given him Ron. And died. In its own way, perfection.

And other than his adoration of Ron, Mr. Osmond had not fallen in love. With inventions, yes. With the steel trellis of dreams, yes. But with women? How silly. For Mr. Osmond was an engineer. And a creator, not only of mechanics, but of impulses in society, some of the paths and curlicues of history. He was, in his own mind, a man-god. And God does not fall in love, except with Creation.

But Mr. Osmond remembered a time when he had been a mere man, in fact a pleasure-loving young man with an engineering degree from Sheffield, and not the vaguest intention of making anything of it. For his father was Hugh Osmond, the steelmaster, a good-natured, indulgent, pleasure-loving man who loved to fling money around, and see his family do it. His father, by chance one of Mr. Carnegie's partners, had really been, in his charming,

laughing way, one of those fools of Fortune. He had been, along with Mr. Carnegie, an American District Telegraph boy. And Mr. Carnegie had taken Hugh Osmond up with him, made him a steelmaster. But Mr. Carnegie tired of his father's pleasure-loving ways, and one day, "Hughie," he said, "the steel business means responsibility; you'll sell out to me." When Mr. Carnegie told you to sell, you sold.

He himself, Eugene Osmond, having seen the decline of his family, had been helped on his way by Mr. Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie had given him the one most precious gift of all, something to believe in, an image in the mind.

It was at the time he and his family were loitering around Europe, making fools of themselves. His father and mother (his mother had once washed clothes in the Allegheny) had become the scandalous rich of the Sunday Supplement variety. And he himself, a little tired of that sort of thing, would go up to Scotland to shoot grouse and see Mr. Carnegie. Sometimes he served as Mr. Carnegie's secretary, never got any money for it, but he and Mr. Carnegie liked to talk to each other. Sometimes Mr. Carnegie would tell him what the stock market would do. Sometimes Mr. Carnegie would dictate poetry to him, or a plan for world peace, or a plan for giving money away. And one day, himself profoundly shocked at something that had happened to his sister, which made him see nakedly the folly and tragedy of his family (his mother keeping a duke, his father keeping a chorus girl, his sister infected with the royal spirochete) . . . in a revulsion to all that, he told Mr. Carnegie he was going back to America and going to work. And Old Andrew, a pleased and benevolent light in his eye, "I'll help you," said he. But the biggest way he helped him was by telling him a story.

"When I was a little boy," Mr. Carnegie said, "and I left Scotland for the first time, there was nothing in the world as big to me as the Castle at Dunfermline." Then he described how he went to Pittsburgh, poor as a churchmouse, and worked his way up, made a fortune, and decided to go back to Scotland to visit. "I still thought," Mr. Carnegie said, "that the Castle at Dunfermline was the biggest thing in the world. And when I saw it, I was never so surprised. Why I myself, in building bridges, had builded much bigger things than that. And Scotland," he said, "though I loved it, seemed like a dwarfed world. And the hand-weavers of

Dunfermline, struggling there, like my father had struggled, with their hand-weaving at the old looms, why they seemed to me like children playing with toys." And Mr. Carnegie's fine eyes were both sad and optimistic, taking the world as it was. "Now, son, you're going back to Pittsburgh, and you're going to work, and let me give you a bit of advice. Don't," he said, "waste your life playing with toys."

And he, Eugene Osmond, had taken Mr. Carnegie's advice. Sometimes, as he looked out the window at the smoke stacks of his great mills and thought of the great combine he had built, he still wondered, in terms of the Eternal, whether or not he had played with toys. But, if he had played with toys, they were big toys. Pittsburgh had become his Meccano set.

And not merely Pittsburgh, he had Meccano sets elsewhere in the world. For he had helped build Dnieprostroi. That was the time when it was immoral to do business with Russia, and he and Henry Ford were the only men in the United States willing to do it. Of course, Russia paid in gold. But that wasn't it. It was a great adventure, planning Dnieprostroi, showing them how to do it, meeting Lenin (nice man, amusing, told jokes, spoke like an engineer, said, "Communism is Russia plus electricity").

Then he helped Tata in India. Tata was a Hindu, came to Pittsburgh to see how they made steel. Went through the wretched hovels along the Allegheny. Was horrified by the conditions under which the mill people lived. "How can you let your workers live like this?" Tata had said, and talked about the modern steel town he was going to build in India. And strangely, he had helped him build it. Nice thing, a little steel production in India might help keep the British in their place.

Then Hitler went into business. By that time the Dnieprostroi he had helped build had turned out to be something of a Frankenstein monster, put the Russians in business. And Hitler wanted to put the Russians out of business. Very good, balance of power, and plenty of orders for his mills. Also, keep the Russians in their place.

He played with the New Order, advanced credits, helped arm Germany and Japan. The Axis was nothing new to him, he knew it had existed since 1918, when the Japanese were paymasters of the German Secret Service in the United States. That was the time when the Japs were big owners of industrial stock in the

United States, and the time of the making of the "flaming coffins" of World War I that Billy Mitchell screamed about. In fact, one of the reasons he had had to get rid of Mitchell and the inventor was that they spilled the beans in Congress about his arming Japan. Congress didn't take it too seriously.

In fact, at one time he had seen Germany and Japan on the way to instituting the New Order in the United States. That was the time Hitler had things all his way in Europe, and Japan was planning the jump to Alaska. And suddenly he got worried. His German connections were getting not impolite, not brusque, but almost too pleasant, a little stuffed and self-satisfied, like the cat that swallowed the canary. And suddenly he began to see. They would not play fair with him, they would let him be *Gauleiter* for steel, but they would take the lion's share. That was not what he was in business for, and from that moment on, he was for war.

As a matter of fact, Eugene Osmond told himself, he had not only, through his aid and encouragement of the Axis, made the war. But once he had declared war, he had become the Number One soldier of the United States. For Eugene Osmond did not believe in soldiers, they were merely the supernumeraries of steel. Eugene Osmond looked upon the gallantry of the individual soldier as something childish, medieval. He knew the war had to be won by a three-to-one ratio of steel, and he helped hurl steel, in overwhelming tonnage, at Germany, Japan.

His production, not merely of his steel mills, but out of his "captive" coal mines, out of his wire and glass plants, out of his plane and accessory plants, was more than prodigious, it was legendary. In forty-five days, on the flats of the Allegheny, Eugene Osmond had built and put into production one of the greatest steel mills in the world. At the same time he was more deeply involved than ever in German cartels, Japanese cartels. He was important in S.K.F., the Swedish ball-bearing cartel, which kept the German war machine rolling. He was important in the cartel of carborundum and other cutting steels, which cost \$27 a ton to Germany, and had sold to the United States Government for \$426 a ton. But all that sort of stuff, he knew, only bored people, people didn't want to think about cartels, they would rather think about boy meets girl, and if all of a sudden your boy in a B-17 was blasted by a Focke-Wulf, you put the gold star in the window and were the last to realize that some of the B-17 and some of the

Focke-Wulf were made by Mr. Osmond's companies and cartels. As we said in the last war, *C'est la guerre*. And as for his own son Ron, dear Ron . . . that you lay smashed and dead, well, it's just part of the price we have to pay. And that his niece, Sylvia, whom he liked because he could talk to her, had gone Communist through seeing what went on behind the scenes, well that couldn't be helped either. At least, as they shouted at each other from the battlements, each profoundly understood the other and the make-up of the world. The one thing Mr. Osmond could not stand was the fools in between. That is, he did not like them intellectually, in other ways he might like them very much.

For Mr. Osmond did not feel he was without humanity. Sometimes, feeling lonely, he wandered along the banks of the Allegheny, in and out of the shacks of people who worked for him, and took pot luck under the gaslight or oil lamp. And sometimes, quitting for a day or two, wishing to commune with Nature, Mr. Osmond went out to his farms, rubbed down his great cattle, talked to his farmers, hired hands, stable hands, occasionally laid a stone walk. And sometimes, like the cultivated gentleman he was, he read oddments from his favourite books; he was well acquainted with the literature of the world. And sometimes, feeling a strange humility and awe of life, he would sit for hours in his private gallery, before his Rembrandts, Goyas, van Goghs. And he would feel that art remained when life was gone. For Mr. Osmond, regarding himself as a comprehensive human being, felt himself the inheritor of the past, the constructor of the future, the profound realist of the present.

As Stoney walked toward Three Mile Mill, he experienced a change of feeling. The very bigness of the mill, its might and power, was persuasive to him. After all, he had known Mr. Osmond for many years, they had in a manner of speaking started together, Mr. Osmond a young owner-manager, himself a worker and foreman there. Maybe, for old times' sake and for the sake of the future, it would be better to do things in a nice way. He thought of the times he and Mr. Osmond had said "Good day," and how they had bumped into each other on New Year's Eve, and how they had grown older under the smoke of the same mills. Now that Stoney was in trouble, the humanities were back with him. Though he had the goods on Mr. Osmond,

he did not wish to bludgeon him, but rather to settle things in a decent man-to-man way.

But as Stoney sat in the outer office, sometimes moving his old bones from the hard bench, sometimes trying the leather couch, at all times under the cold, puritanical eyes of Williams, Mr. Osmond's pale, thin, bespectacled male secretary—somehow he felt a gloating quality in Williams; the little secret soul of Williams hidden away behind his pale blue New England eyes seemed to say: Well, you're not such a big man any more.

For never had he waited so long. Of course, there was a war on, and a couple of generals had gone in there to see Mr. Osmond, and the sun, which came out of the black murk, set behind the E flags that waved over Mr. Osmond's plants, and rose again, out of the next greyish day . . . and he was still waiting. He knew something now, it was no good. With all the things between Mr. Osmond and himself, it was no good. Mr. Osmond did not want to help him, he felt it through the plaster of the walls, he felt Mr. Osmond was cold. And there was no help for it, he would have to fasten himself on Mr. Osmond like a leech.

Stoney hated this, he had his pride. And now he had to admit it to himself, the boy and the Polack girl had cooked him, and nothing but his own dirty knavery, and the knavery of the world, the stuff between him and Osmond, could save him.

Finally he was admitted to Mr. Osmond's office, and though Mr. Osmond smiled a little and his sandy eyes had a glow, Stoney knew in essence he was right. Mr. Osmond, fingering that lump of greyish-gold on the top of his roundhouse dome, was just killing time as if to say: Well, I've known the man a long time, I'll see what he wants.

"Mr. Osmond," Stoney said, "I'm in trouble."

Mr. Osmond nodded, he knew.

"And," said Stoney, "I'd like to ask you to help me out."

Mr. Osmond nodded, no doubt.

"Well?" Stoney said.

Osmond looked at him. The Squire stood there, tall, hawkish, his long, dark, frayed coat about him, hat in hand. He had not seen him for a number of years, the last time had been a wintery twilight when they bumped into each other around the mill, Stoney up to his shenanigans, no doubt, getting some foreman to fire somebody. Osmond didn't like it, it was dirty. The man had

been his dog, but a dirty dog. Perhaps the time had come to dispense with him. Let the dog-catchers have him, let them take him to the pound. "Squire," he said, "I don't know that I can help you. I don't know that I can lend myself to that sort of thing."

Stoney looked at him, greyish, crestfallen, but his eyes measuring, acute. He saw now, that's the way it was. There was no use now depending on the humanities. Just dog eat dog, each dog has its day, we'll see whose day this is.

And looking at him, his bony face and greyish eyes almost jutting out, "Mr. Osmond," Stone said, "they got indictments on me, and I got a good chance to go down."

Mr. Osmond nodded, he knew.

"And," said Stoney, "if I was you, I wouldn't let me go down."

"No," said Mr. Osmond, "why not?"

"Mr. Osmond," Stoney said, standing by his desk, his long finger pointing at him, his eyes staring at him, "if I go down, I'll go like a strong man. I'll take you with me. You see, Mr. Osmond," he said, "they're going to try me. And I'm going to try and save myself. And I'll have to admit things. Because," he said, "I did things, and they got the goods on me."

"But," he said, "I did those things for you." He looked into Osmond's eyes. "I guess I needn't mention," he began, "the arms and legs, the inventions, the Anarchist."

He saw Mr. Osmond's eyes flash with anger, Mr. Osmond about to say: get out, or something like that. But he saw that Mr. Osmond thought better of it. "Besides," said Stoney, "I don't come here begging, I got some right, you owe me something. You made the millions," Stoney said, "I made the nickels and got the cheap little prerogatives."

Mr. Osmond, his eyes sandpaperish, just looked at him. "I gave you no prerogatives," he said.

"Well," said Stoney, "that's my story, and I'll stick to it, and there's a good many around this mill, and Mill District, might bear me out."

Mr. Osmond looked at him. It was true. "All right, Pike," he said, "I'll think about it."

And now, with some dignity, feeling he had achieved his purpose, Stone nodded, went on his way.

Mr. Osmond was not the man to waste time on "how dare you," "the terrible humiliation," or anything like that. Nevertheless, for one of the rare times in his life, phrases like that crossed his mind. He did feel he was a big man, mighty Dnieprostroi, his steel, hotter than the flames of hell, now scratching through heaven, his own soul breathing in the stratosphere . . . and to be talked to this way by this dog.

He thought of the afternoon, in this very office, he had taken the Squire up to the highest mountain he had thought suitable for him, shown him Mill District. And as in the case of Dnieprostroi, he had made himself a Frankenstein monster. Was the man going to destroy him, was it even vaguely possible?

Eugene Osmond wanted to talk to the Judge, but he could not quickly bring himself to it. He had an old habit, when troubles fell upon him he tried to go his accustomed way, doing his daily tasks, and in the nature of events, time healing all, the troubles would dissolve, a solution appear.

So this night, in his great library, hung with the Rembrandts, the fire going in the great hearth, and the globe of the world half sunk in its special recess in the middle of the floor, the Judge and Eugene Osmond were working. Eugene at his long table, over his usual maps, and the Judge momentarily by the fire.

Osmond found himself no longer desirous of concentrating on Manchuria. He looked down the vista of his long library, the Judge there, not looking at him, but seated, looking into the fire. He needed the Judge, this great servitor, a soul money could not buy. And the Judge needed him, through him came into matters of steel, finance. It was a strange thing, this association, more intimate in some ways than any other. The love of old men, enrapt in money and power. At the same time, Eugene thought, there was a tragic bow that played across the strings of these nights. For there was one thing he could never forgive. His own son, Ron, the beautiful, the brave, was dead. And the Judge's son, Luthe, with the useless, idle ways, he lived.

Now, feeling the very life about him curling with irony, Eugene Osmond was able to expose himself. "Judge," he said, "a man came to see me to-day." And he told him about Stoney.

The Judge left his place by the fire. He stood now, tall, gaunt, the silvery hair hanging down about his ruddy brow, something honest and aggrieved in his blue workaday eyes (those eyes,

Osmond thought, inevitably gave him away as the miller's son). "Eugene," the Judge said, "did you give the Squire his special prerogative?"

Eugene Osmond thought of the Squire and these women. "I suppose I vaguely knew about it," he said, "in some recess of my mind."

That, thought the Judge, would do for complicity.

"If anyone had come to me," said Osmond, "I would have put a stop to it."

Doubtless, thought the Judge. And now, thinking of Stoney, "Will he talk?"

Eugene Osmond saw Stoney, the bony, coarse-grained, wolfish face, the grey, wolfish eyes, there was something indomitable about him. "Yes," he said, "he'll talk."

"Well," said the Judge, "hadn't you better do something?"

"What?"

That, thought the Judge, was the question. The whole thing had gone too far.

"Why haven't they picked him up?" Eugene said.

The Judge didn't know, there was a rumour around the courthouse that they were preparing more indictments.

"Let them," Osmond said. He was tired of legalistics, tired of the filthy, blackmailing Squire. He was not afraid of him. He explained to the Judge, the Squire was a rapist, an adulterer, a perjurer, a thief. Even if he talked, the world would understand, the Squire was trying to save himself by hanging on to Eugene Osmond's coat tails. And if he himself had to go on the stand, he would admit he had once befriended him. "Once," he would say, "he was a decent man. But he's changed. Naturally, I can't watch a man like that, I have to produce steel, there's a war." And the world would understand. "Let him talk," Osmond said, "if he talks long enough he'll hang himself."

Now he had another idea. "Is there any chance he may be brought up before you?" The Judge nodded. "Well, you see to it he is," Eugene Osmond said. "And when he is brought before you, you hold him in big bail."

They looked at each other, the Judge's worn eyes with a gleam of understanding. Big bail might frighten the Squire, possibly make him run away, at least show him he had nothing to hope for.

Thus it happened that Stoney Pike, now indicted on 33 counts,

came up before Judge Fretz. The purpose of the hearing was to set bail.

There was no jury, merely the Judge, Stoney, the old tipstaff Titus Jones, some other people who wanted bail, shepherded by their lawyers. Stoney came in without a lawyer, he thought it better so, it would look more like the innocent man, the lone man going his lone way.

There were two onlookers, Ned Woolbine and Joe Drew. Joe felt he had a natural interest in the matter, he wanted to see Stoney as he began to move toward judgment. "You don't think," Joe said to Woolbine, "there's any harm in my being there?" And Woolbine said, "No, come along with me."

They saw the Judge, taking his time about it, shuffling the papers before him. Then, a rather steely light in his eye, he looked at Stoney. "Thirty-three indictments," he said. "I shall set bail at \$3,000 each."

At first Stoney didn't seem to get it, his face was set, bony, grim, his eyes looking down. Then, as he realized what this meant, \$99,000 bail, almost a hundred thousand dollars, his eyes had a fixed, staring dumbness, like the eyes of cattle just struck by the killer's hammer. His mouth fell apart, revealing his large, fangy teeth, which seemed to have lost their bite. He shook himself, as if shaking off some of the deadly paralysis of the blow. "Your Honour," he managed, "does this mean \$99,000?" From His Honour, the faintest staring nod.

"But, Your Honour," Stoney said, "in all my years near the Pittsburgh bench, I've scarcely heard of such bail." The Judge merely shook his head the faintest trifle, as if to say: I wouldn't say any more. "You may have time," he said, "to arrange bail."

Stoney nodded.

Joe Drew stood looking on. Something of Stoney's injury had communicated itself to him. He felt sorry. He had come in quite a different mood, the observer, just to see what went on. But when this staggering blow fell on Stoney, he somehow felt some of it fall on himself.

He motioned to Woolbine: come on, let's get out of here. They started out. Woolbine went to a booth, phoned his paper.

Out on the street, Joe felt Woolbine looking at him. "What," said Woolbine, "is the matter with you?"

Joe didn't know. It might have been, in a way, his day of

triumph. He had started this case. But he had started it because of what had happened to his girl, other girls. He had a feeling now that Stoney wasn't being punished for that, he was being punished for some other reason. That immense bail—"Listen," he said, "is that the usual bail?"

Woolbine shook his head.

"What does it mean?"

And Woolbine, with the buried novelist within, began to grope his way. "It's Osmond," he said. And he explained, where would Stoney go to save himself? Mr. Osmond. And who controlled the Judge? Mr. Osmond. Where was this unexpected pressure coming from? Mr. Osmond.

Joe didn't know. But if Woolbine's thesis was correct, he felt let down. He wanted Stoney in the toils of the law, not in the toils of Mr. Osmond.

Later that day he saw the headline, "Squire Held in \$99,000 Bail," didn't know what to make of it.

But Stoney knew. This was betrayal. This meant Mr. Osmond was double-crossing him. Mr. Osmond didn't believe he'd go down like a strong man.

Maybe Mr. Osmond was right. Those terrible indictments. Again he thought of flight.

No. There was plenty of time for that, for hiring counsel, that sort of thing. Thoughts came to him:

Suicide.

Go away.

Osmond, if only he had Osmond, Osmond could save him.

All of a sudden an electric current went through him—he had it, he had it, he had Osmond. It was unbelievable, but he had him.

It was in his hand, right in the mitt, brother, it had been there all the time. He had Osmond, had him so there was only one thing Osmond could do. He, Stoney Pike, had Osmond.

And he had out.

A strange glee went through him, he had it, he had Osmond.

It was past manufactured strokes, past the arms and legs, the Anarchist. It was vital, modern, recent, it concerned the war, and the war effort.

Mr. Osmond had made cracked steel plates.

Of course, Carnegie-Illinois had been in the papers about steel plates. But they were cleared of all charges. Mr. Osmond's case was much worse. And not a breath about him had come out.

For which Mr. Osmond could thank Stoney Pike. It was one of the many little things that he had done for Mr. Osmond. And Mr. Osmond didn't even know. He had done him this little service, like many others, just in the course of events.

A woman had come to him, just before the trial, when he was a respected and important Squire. The woman's problem was this. She was an inspector at Three Mile Mill. Checking plates, steel plates, for the Navy. And Liberty ships.

Some of the plates were no good. She reported it. She had been told to pass them just the same.

The woman had a son in the Navy, she knew boys in the Merchant Marine. She couldn't sleep nights. She couldn't sleep nights because she saw the plates cracking apart on the high seas.

As a matter of fact, some of them did, some of the plates cracked apart.

And Mr. Osmond had made them. And he and his managers and his foremen had instructed the checkers to pass them.

It was a nice how-do-you-do. It was criminal sabotage. It was sabotage and misrepresentation of the highest order. It was a fraud upon the United States Government. And it was throwing American boys into the water.

Mighty as he was, Mr. Osmond couldn't stand exposure on something like that. That wasn't merely indictable, it was a Federal offence. Some Senate investigating committee or the War Frauds Committee or the Attorney-General would like to know about it. For it was a stink in the nostrils of the nation, of the United Nations.

Just to expose it would end Mr. Osmond, and it might end him for all time. The Government might take over the Osmond plants, prosecute. And Mr. Osmond would go down.

Now then, when the woman, Mrs. Decker, had come to him, she had told him the whole story, names, dates, exactly who the superintendents were who had told her to pass the bum plates. They were all high up, it led straight to Osmond. What's more, the woman had told him of other checkers in the plant, other mothers and fathers haunted by the same thing. And she had

asked him, should they go ahead and pass the cracked steel plates, what should they do?

Fortunately, Greeny Murowski and Tommy Nowak were around, so he had witnesses. And fortunately, he had entered it all down in a little black book.

He had Osmond, he had him good. He saw him, his round face, the sandy eyes. And as if speaking to him, why you dirty, money-loving sonofabitch, what did I ever do that's as bad as that? I laid the girls, sure. But you, you bastard, you're willing to sacrifice our boys. Our boys, on the cracked steel plates.

Stoney laughed, he had him.

Fortunately, he had told the woman to keep quiet. He had told her the standard thing to say under the circumstances. He had said, "You don't wanna say anything now, lady, to hurt the war effort."

So he had this dope, and he had something else. He had a method. What had put him in trouble? The boy, investigating. Well, if investigations were what was wanted, he would give 'em investigations. And in Polish, Bohemian, Russian, Czech and every other language. Finally, he had something for his constables and punks to do. They were in this too, now they could save themselves.

They could go out, talk to the Polish people, the Slovak people, the people who worked in the mill, the checkers, the testers, get the dope. And he, Squire Pike, might suddenly rise out of it the knight in shining armour, old Civic Virtue himself. By God, if he could crack the story of the cracked steel plates—wouldn't Woolbine go for that one! And if ever he were brought to trial, he could point to the Judge, the big shareholder in the mill, holding him in great bail, he could say they were persecuting him because they knew he was going to expose the *cracked steel plates*!

But it would never get that far, they would never dare bring him to trial. All he needed was the evidence, and Osmond would come to his senses.

In the morning he marshalled his forces, got out the little black book with the names and dates, started with his constables and onhangers on an investigation that would rock Mill District, the United States, the world.

Some days later Stoney wrote a letter, just a few lines in his

own hand: "Dear Mr. Osmond, I would like to see you about the cracked steel plates. Sincerely, J. Stoneham Pike."

Mr. Osmond read the letter. Then he read it again. Ah yes, he could see. Senatorial investigation. The Roman holiday of the Press.

Mr. Osmond went to the window, looked at the E flags flying over his plant. E for Efficiency. No, this wouldn't do. There could be no exposure on the cracked steel plates.

Mr. Osmond sent for Stoney. "Well," he said, "I see you've made it."

Stoney nodded, he had made it.

"Now," said Mr. Osmond, "what do you want?"

"Just get me out of my troubles," Stoney said.

Mr. Osmond nodded. "How?"

But Stoney, in his fine grey suit, good linen, was in his grave way riding high. "I don't know," he said; "that's your business."

Mr. Osmond looked at him. "You sure," he said, "you have what you say you have?"

From his pocket Stoney took a number of glossy photostats of depositions Mrs. Decker and others had made. Mr. Osmond looked at them. Yes, the old wolf had made good.

"All right," Mr. Osmond said. "I shall see what can be done." And after Stoney had gone, he called the Judge, saying he must see him to-night.

And when they were in the great library, "Judge," said Osmond, "those indictments against the Squire, can they be dismissed?"

The Judge looked at him. Well, really. Indictments on, indictments off. This was buffoonery. The Judge, in his legal being, was offended, annoyed. And rather haughtily, as if dismissing a child, "Don't talk nonsense. Eugene."

But Eugene, with his unabashed persistence, "Some cases are nol-prossed."

"Not this one," said the Judge.

Eugene Osmond got up, stood before the Judge, and quite casually: "We made cracked steel plates," he said. "I insisted those plates be passed."

Verdammt! The Judge couldn't help it, out of his past his Germanism came plopping up at him. But tightening himself

into his American structure, his judicial structure, "Look here," he said, "may I ask you why?"

Eugene Osmond looked down. Now really, were we going to have morality?

"We don't need that kind of money," the Judge said. One of the largest stockholders had spoken.

"It wasn't a matter of money," Eugene said.

"No," said the Judge, "what was it?"

Effrontery, Eugene Osmond said to himself. And turning on the Judge, "Look here," he said, "you're a judge. You sit on the bench all day. The law is just the same as it's been for a thousand years. But I," he said, "live in a changing world, in the most vivid acceleration of history. At one and the same time I was making tanks, building a new mill, putting up plants for synthetic rubber, getting out stuff for Lend-Lease. And they came to me with the most impossible quotas. And on top of that, they wanted steel plates."

"You could have given up on them," the Judge said, "you could have farmed them out."

"I," said Eugene Osmond, "am not fighting a war to farm out or give up. But to consolidate."

There, thought the Judge, I knew it. It was mercenary, though in a far-flung way.

Eugene Osmond looked at him. He saw the Judge's cold eyes flying their tatters of decency. "You condemn me," he said, "you're being a *Feinschmecker*, Judge." From his European youth, Eugene knew enough German to make the Judge uncomfortable.

The Judge looked at him with a steely gleam, as if a small blade were concealed in the threadbare cloth of his eye. I, the Judge wanted to say, despite my Germanism, am a better American than you. He saw himself, back through the years, the war hero with his medals. But that wasn't all. Even his Germanism resented this, that part of him that was a miller's son. He believed in good workmanship, a job well done.

The Judge knew himself for what he was, he was the man who killed the thing he loved. But that he could forgive, crime of passion. He could absolve himself of the murder-guilt of the German soul. For he had tried to counterbalance that with his belief in Order, the American way. And in the lifting of standards of human life that he saw in Eugene's industrialism.

But cracked steel plates. It had a strange murdering soullessness.

He saw a picture in his mind, boys in the water.

But what was he going to do? Part with Eugene? See Eugene in the public pillory? Possibly himself too?

The Judge felt his moral spasm come to an end. Eugene must have felt it too, for his sandy eyes smiling, almost as if understanding him, in sympathy with him, he said, "Come, help me, Judge."

Never had Eugene appealed so directly. What a man he was, how insidiously persuasive, what fine things you could serve with him, yet somehow he took your soul. Well, there was no help for it, he had to go on. But this time, to serve him, you had to tell him the truth.

"Eugene," he said bluntly, "the indictments cannot be quashed. There is no way. The Squire will have to stand trial. And you, Eugene," he said, "you yourself may have to stand trial."

"Suppose," Eugene said, "the Squire forfeits bail, goes away?"

The Judge merely looked at him. "Of course," he said, "if he does it of his own free will. And if the law doesn't bring him back."

Don't worry about that, Eugene thought; where I'll send him, they won't bring him back.

Eugene Osmond, at his office, was talking to the Squire. "Squire," he said, "you go away. The bail is heavy, but I'll make it up to you. And," he said, "I'll add a good deal more."

The grey eyes just looked at him, unrelenting.

"Well, speak up," Mr. Osmond said.

The Squire was thinking. Mr. Osmond seemed fair enough, a little chipper, as if out of his troubles, but fair enough. It was almost a shame to spoil it, but—"I'm not going away."

Osmond looked at him. "Squire, I could make it a great deal of money."

Stoney was contained and grave. The man didn't seem to understand. He would explain. He told him, he had enough money for the rest of his days. "It isn't a matter of money," he said.

Osmond felt the pressure of the cracked steel plates . . . "What is it a matter of?"

The Squire looked at him. It was a matter of pride, of leading

his own life, his own way. "Look, Mr. Osmond," he said, "you're in trouble yourself. Why don't you go away?"

"I've got the mill," Eugene Osmond said.

"And I've got Mill District," Stoney said. And there they were, back to the deal of long ago.

"What do you want?" Mr. Osmond said.

"I," said Stoney, "want it to be just the same." He did, he was thinking, he wanted to be Squire again, no troubles, have power over people, maybe Polack girls. . . . Eugene Osmond, looking at the sickly pearl in the Squire's eye, with its gleam of pride, knew he was telling the truth. But how foolish, to want things "the same." It was the cry of the world, the foolish world that, come war or revolution or depression, wanted things to be the same. Perhaps he could knock some sense into him.

Osmond rose. He was glad they were now speaking in simple human terms. "Squire," he said, shaking his head at him, "it will never be the same. Even if you get out of this, you can't be Squire again, they won't elect you."

Maybe they will, Stoney was thinking, maybe I could stuff the ballot boxes. But even if that won't work, I want to hang around here, I'll be a big man, deal in real estate, I've got enough on all of you, you'll have to make me a Referee in Bankruptcy, or something. I'll do fine, I'll have a hand in things, not be a miserable fugitive.

Mr. Osmond, seeing those sick eyes in their egotist's dream, "Stop dreaming, Squire," he said; "take the money, go away."

But if it was a dream, Stone wanted the dream. And looking at Osmond, frowning at him, "Mr. Osmond," he said, "if I wanted to run away, I'd have run away long ago." He thought of the times he had been impelled to run away, of all the grit it had taken to stay, of his hard-bitten insistence that had rooted him here. I'm a tree, he said to himself. But to Osmond, "It's no use," he said, "I've made up my mind."

"What do you want?" Mr. Osmond said.

"Just take the indictments off me."

Osmond sighed. "Now look, Squire," he said. "I've talked to the Judge; he says there's no way."

But Stoney was not to be budged. In his crooked life he had found a final crooked sanctuary, the cracked steel plates. And as long as he clung to them, he felt he would be safe.

"Don't forget," he said quietly, "I've got the cracked steel plates."

Eugene Osmond nodded, something from the cracked steel plates was beginning to seep into his skull. But trying to forget all that, looking into those cold grey eyes, "It may interest you to know," he said, "the Judge says I may go to jail."

Stoney nodded, he could see that too.

And Mr. Osmond, looking at him, "Is that what you're after?"

Stoney shook his head, no, that was not what he was after. He was merely after his own freedom.

"If you persist in your attitude," Mr. Osmond said, "we may both land in the same cell."

Stoney almost smiled, they had started together, they would end together. And as he said, if he went down, he would go down like a strong man, he would take Mr. Osmond with him.

But he smiled, and his eyes softening, he looked at Osmond in a friendly way, shook his head. "You won't go to jail, Mr. Osmond," he said, "you're too big a man. You'll get out of it. And so will I." And he looked at him, pleasant, smiling, man-to-man. "But don't think of money," he said. "Just take the indictments off me, that's all I ask."

They looked at each other, and Stoney went his way.

Eugene Osmond realized that he was in quite a predicament. Really, to be in the clutches of this creature who had been his creature.

He felt cold, clammy, as if in the ooze of the cracked steel plates.

He saw the face of Ron, the beautiful, heroic face, the athlete's face, the poet's face, his golden hair flashing in the sun, and his eyes which had become sardonic. He remembered the words Ron had smilingly spoken, "Pop, why don't you give 'em a fair shake?" And now Ron, smiling in affection and sardonic contemplation: Pop, is a Pittsburgh Squire going to do for you?

Eugene Osmond came out of it. One thing was certain, the case would never come to trial. Not anything the boy had dug up, not anything the Squire had dug up. None of it would ever come out.

Osmond believed in simplification. There were, as he saw it, two men in the case, the boy and the Squire. He had spoken to

the Squire, managed to do nothing with him. Perhaps the time had come to talk to the boy.

Fortunately, the boy had a lawyer, doubtless a call from Eugene Osmond would be persuasive to him.

Eugene Osmond called Ben Jordan.



Book III
MR. OSMOND

CHAPTER I

MR. OSMOND AND JOE DREW

IN POTTER'S HOTEL the fog-cutter stood in the bay window. It was far from complete. Joe's new sensible automobile jack was worked out, and stood to one side. And he was thinking of redesigning that most beautiful and wasteful method of heating, the fireplace.

Of course, there was one man who knew more about fireplaces than anyone else, that was Benjamin Franklin. Uncle Charlie and Pop had drummed Benjamin Franklin into him; now he was reading Ben's stuff on fireplaces, and seeing if he couldn't apply it in a modern way. And as you couldn't read Ben Franklin on fireplaces or anything else without wanting others to know about him, sometimes he read snatches to Stell.

She was surprised. Benjamin Franklin didn't like the eagle as a symbol of the United States, he was against using dollars for money, he wanted a standard of money to be called a "labour" which was to represent the value of a man's labour for a day. Joe read her Ben's letter on the choice of a mistress, and how it was better to take an old one, "because they were so grateful." Stell found herself amused.

She was very happy these days, because things were going so well between her and Joe. Officially she still lived with her parents, but she saw Joe nearly every day. She came whenever she could, with no phoning about it, it was understood. And once or twice a week they made dinner, going shopping for stuff and fixing it on the gas-burner he had rigged in his room.

They even, on one occasion, entertained. "Two guys from the "plat," as Joe called it, passed through town. He had read about

it in the papers, went down to the station to meet them. He and the two guys were the only ones left of the "plat." And, she discovered, he was quite a hero to them. Not for the actual fighting, they took that for granted, but because of an improvement he had made, right in the middle of battle, on the guns. They had Garands and some old Springfields, and for some reason the Garands didn't suit them, neither did the Springfields. Then Joe got an idea, took a Springfield apart, fitted it with an automatic clip, and everybody liked it better. It made her feel good, she liked to feel there was something to him. Joe, I love you, Joe.

She thought of the times, during the trial and before, when she had almost given up. But she felt now, in the way she had stuck to him and he had stuck to her, they had earned each other. And his love made her able to face the world, she had her job in the war plant. And sometimes when she came in, tired, and he rubbed her hands, and kissed her, and they looked into each other's eyes she could feel something cementing between them. And sometimes he said, "We got it, baby."

We got it, Joe.

And they hugged each other. Then they would go over to her place to see the baby. And after dinner come back here, and she would watch him work, or they would read. Or he, now pretty low in dough, would tell her that if he could only finish some of this stuff in the next few weeks, and get out of his remaining legal tangle, he'd go to work, he wanted to work in metals, new metals, light metals, metals to serve new purposes, make things lighter or cheaper or better. And taking her in his arms, looking into her eyes, "We'll get some place, baby," he said.

If it gets any better, and with a ring on my finger, I'll be in heaven, she said to herself. Such, in a general way, was the condition of their lives when Ben Jordan called, told him Mr. Osmond wanted to see him.

Joe didn't feel much like it. "What do you think?" he said.

"Sure," Bennie said, "Mr. Osmond is a big man, he may be able to help you. You're not out of your troubles yet, you know."

Joe didn't know. With Lordy all set to prosecute Stoney, he felt his troubles were nearly over. And Mr. Osmond rankled in him. Still, maybe there was something to it. And being of two minds about it, he called Sylvia MacTavish.

"I wouldn't know what to say," she said, "but if you like I'll

drop in to-night." She did, and standing at the door, her rather fleshy palm indicating someone with her, "I've brought the expert"—the expert was Luthe.

Luthe came in, smiled his smile of fools and angels. He may have been a bit abashed, but in a moment he was as much at home with Joe and Stell as with his own abashment. And when they talked about Mr. Osmond, "Joe," said Luthe, "I fell down on you once, I'd like to make it up to you. Keep away from that man."

Joe said, "Why?"

Luthe smiled, his thin-lipped, angelic smile. "You'll forgive me," he said, "but I don't think you can handle him. When you took on Stoney, you took on a small-time badman. But Uncle Eugene," he said, "is another story, his Mill District is the world. Do you know who Eugene Osmond is?" And his eyes seemed to gleam in a great arc, passing over Three Mile Mill, Osmond Aeronautical, Osmond International. "He's the man who's making World War III."

Joe felt stunned. "Now?" he said.

"Now." And Luthe's pale green eyes stared at him as if to say: go on, say it, tell me I'm crazy.

"It's incredible," Joe said.

"It is incredible," Luthe said, "as incredible as Hitler and Pearl Harbor. Sometimes I think only the incredible is true." And he told them, outside of handling various matters that came up, "That's what Uncle Eugene and my father do every night, they cook the next war."

Joe looked at Sylvia. Her dark eyes, thoughtful and brooding through the horn-rimmed spectacles, now avoided him, looked down. "I was always fascinated by my Uncle Eugene," she said. "I used to think he'd be a great man in any form of society. And of course, he raised me, I owe him a great deal. Anyway," she said, indicating Luthe, "it's true. I've found an apartment, I'm leaving Uncle Eugene's."

They all walked out together. Luthe took Sylvia her way, Joe walked home with Stell. He had a strange feeling that some change had come over Luthe, that possibly Sylvia had instilled something in him, that somehow to-night, though it was Luthe's brain and Luthe's willingness to say anything, it was Sylvia's will.

He said something of the sort to Stell, and though she was

interested, her mind was on something else. As she looked at him, he saw her concern for him, he knew she was thinking of Osmond. "Don't go, Joey."

"We'll see," he said. He had a gathering feeling that he had to go. Not merely because of the past, but because of this new thing. How strange it was, a man whose great chance had come through the plane scandals of World War I, whose own son had died in World War II . . . now making World War III. He felt very curious about him. Maybe he should go over and see what he wanted.

High up on a bluff, above the river, duly ensconced in shrubbery, a stretch of lawn and a magnificent hand-wrought iron fence, was the house of Eugene Osmond. As it had been built after a castle, it looked like one, a spread of greyish stone, with towers and turrets. Joe knew the history of the house, Eugene Osmond's father had built it, lost it, Eugene had bought it back.

Before this house stood Joe Drew and his girl. He didn't want her there, but "I just can't bear to part with you, even for a moment," she had said. He had told her that he and Mr. Osmond might be more than a moment. "I'll go, Joey," she said. "I just want to see you go in."

As he stood there he remembered something Pop had said, "A house is what it looks out on." This house looked out on an immense, fascinating view, a view of flame, great billows and bursts of flame in the Pittsburgh night. As Joe looked out upon this drama of fire, he felt the deeper meaning of it. Pittsburgh was the cauldron of the war. And Mr. Osmond, for good and for bad, had stirred this cauldron as it never had been stirred before. Yes, Osmond, said something inside, give us steel for this war, but give us no more war.

He squeezed Stell's hand, sent her along, set his face to the house. O.K., war-maker, he said to himself as he went up the walk, let's have a look at you.

From Sylvia and Ron he knew how he would be received. The tall, skeletal Graves would come to the door. Graves was an embassy butler, he knew protocol. Mr. Osmond had him because, on occasion, he regarded his house as the Embassy of Steel. Many important people, Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, had been received there. Many war-makers, cartel-makers.

Now, thought Joe, of all things, I'm here.

Graves came to the door, took him down the hall to the great library. Joe saw a man in a dressing-gown working at a long table; the man had a pleasant, tallowish, healthy face, fine light gritty eyes, and this was Mr. Osmond. "Mr. Osmond, sir," said Graves, "this is Mr. Drew."

Eugene Osmond got up, smiled. His fine eyes had a pleasant sparkle. "I'm glad to know you," he said, and put out his hand.

Joe, his dark eyes shy, took it, it was the thing to do. He felt an awe here, in this large room with its many books, the globe in the centre, and this masterful man. He decided to take it easy, get his bearings, he looked at a Rembrandt.

"Like pictures?" Mr. Osmond said.

Joe smiled. "Well, I don't get much chance to see stuff like this."

Mr. Osmond, in a friendly and large way, "Look around." And as Joe went from one picture to another, Osmond went with him. "Sobieski," Osmond said, "Rembrandt posed for it himself." And now, observing the young man's dark eyes, the jagged face, not a bad sort, Mr. Osmond said to himself. "Mr. Carnegie," he said, "once called art the ultimate possession." It was a thing he had said before, it lulled people a little, made them easy to take over. "Suppose we sit down." They did.

"I knew your father," Mr. Osmond said, "he was a remarkable man."

You ought to know, Joe said, but to himself.

Osmond was looking at him. The sensible face, a sort of deep burn in his eye, but pleasant. He remembered Ron's description: mechanical, silent, thoughtful, intent. "I'll tell you why I asked you here," Mr. Osmond said. "I'd like you to drop your case."

Joe felt cold. "Against the Squire?"

Mr. Osmond nodded.

Joe said, "Why?"

"Well," said Mr. Osmond, "some people have come to me, Mr. Donnough, Mr. Varnum. . . ." This was true. Mr. Donnough, of Donnough Bank, wanted the case stopped. He didn't like it. Besides, Mr. Henry Varnum had come to him. Mr. Varnum was the owner of the Varnum Box Factory, where a girl had driven a nail through her thumb, and Stoney had taken advantage of it. Mr. Varnum, Joe saw, had become agitated because he and

Lordy had sifted the whole matter. "We weren't going after decent people," Joe said.

Mr. Osmond nodded. "Well, you've started something," he said. "As I see it, you and the Squire have been going at each other through the city, and every once in a while you strike an innocent bystander."

You're no innocent bystander, Joe thought.

"Now look here," Mr. Osmond said, "there's a war on. It doesn't do any good to have stuff like that come out. Now, Mr. Donnough and myself and some other people want this thing stopped."

Joe looked at him. "And let the Squire out of it?"

And Mr. Osmond, looking back into those firm, dark eyes, "Yes, let the Squire out of it."

I, said Joe, will be an everlasting sonofabitch if I do. The Squire must mean an awful lot to him, he thought. Of course, Mr. Osmond himself was in a manner involved in the case. And looking at Mr. Osmond, "You can't stop this case," he said.

"No," said Mr. Osmond, "why not?"

"Because," said Joe, "there's an honest District Attorney, and he means to go ahead with it."

Mr. Osmond knew all about the honest District Attorney, who was making himself Governor. If there weren't an honest District Attorney, he said to himself, I wouldn't have to talk to you. "Now look here," Mr. Osmond said, "this case is going to be stopped. And I am going to stop it. Only," he said, "I think it would be better if it came from you. I'd like to put it to you in terms of achieving a certain human good."

"By stopping the case?" Joe said.

"By stopping the case." This to Joe was unimaginable. The only good he saw was in dragging the whole thing into the light, making an end of Stoney. "Now look here," Mr. Osmond said, and told his plot. If, instead of all those girls traipsing to the stand and telling what had happened, each one was to get \$2,000, \$3,000, possibly \$5,000, and a new life in California, a job in the Osmond plants out there—"Wouldn't that," said Mr. Osmond, "achieve a greater human good?"

Joe understood. He would have a case, but the witnesses would disappear. Of course, Katie Kralic would probably stand up. And Stell. Still, even Stell might be powerfully compelled by

\$5,000, California, a whole new life. It was very clever.

"And," said Mr. Osmond, "your own case could be discharged." Joe saw something, if the case against the Squire melted away, he was in trouble again.

"Of course," said Mr. Osmond, "if you don't want to do it, my agents can do it. Only I think it nicer if it came from you. You started it, you can stop it." The centres of Mr. Osmond's eyes were like bits of bronze. "I'd make it worth your while," he said.

Jesus Christ, Joe thought, he certainly must want to get the Squire out of it. He had a thought, he'd better see Lordy in the morning, tell him all about it, Lordy could probably see to it that the witnesses wouldn't get away.

"Well?" Mr. Osmond said.

Joe looked at him, shook his head.

Mr. Osmond got it. He took a few steps up and down. He was in a bit of a temper, he hated being baulked. But then he remembered something, the most profound thing of all human engineering. What makes people tick? If only he could find out what made this young man tick, maybe he could arrive at something.

And pleasantly now, "What do you want?" he said.

"In what way?"

"Just in a general human way, what do you want?" Mr. Osmond said.

He saw the young man think about it. "I want it on the level," Joe said; "I want it on the square."

"What?" Mr. Osmond said.

"Everything."

Mr. Osmond looked into those dark eyes. Ah, so that was it. He could give him anything else. But he couldn't give him this. He remembered his troubles with Ron, to whom he had read the Bible and *Idylls of the King*, then tried to induct into the stolen patents, the steel business. And Ron had gone into the Service, to be on the level. Died for it, in a way.

Mr. Osmond understood, but, "Isn't that being rather young?"

Joe didn't know. He saw the face of that kid, that fifteen-year-old kid, on Guadalcanal, running, running, falling toward the flame. "I've been in the war, Mr. Osmond," he said, "I'd like to think it wasn't all for nothing."

Mr. Osmond understood. That was part of his conscious big-

ness, that he understood. But nevertheless, the Squire, the cracked steel plates. A strange thought struck him. This young man had made quite an investigation, could it be he had stumbled on the cracked steel plates? "You have nothing against me, have you?" Eugene Osmond asked.

Joe thought about it, shook his head. "Outside of my father," he said. "And that you seem to be helping the Squire." As for World War III, he didn't know enough about it to say anything.

"And that's all?" Mr. Osmond said.

"That's all."

Osmond looked at him. He seemed to be telling the truth. He better be. Osmond began to see something. Give the miserable Squire what he wanted, and you could settle with him. But with this young man, with his desire to have things different, how could you ever settle with him? Maybe you couldn't. Maybe the only thing to do was dispose of him. Not a nice thing to do, not pleasant, but if he persisted in throwing a monkey wrench into the machinery . . . in truth, though he didn't know it, from this moment on the young man was on trial for his life.

And Joe, looking at Mr. Osmond's eyes, now unfathomable, unrevealing . . . somehow did know it. Mr. Osmond was the man who once said, "You can't run a steel mill without armed gunmen." This was the man who had jockeyed some of World War II. And according to his own relatives, was jockeying World War III. And Ron had said a strange thing. It was when they were talking about the patents. "Pop can murder," Ron had said.

Joe swallowed. Maybe Luthe was right. Maybe he was up against small potatoes in the Squire, as compared to this man.

"Now look here," Eugene Osmond said. "Drop this thing. There's a war on. We don't want all this stuff to come out. You're not merely putting a Squire on trial, you're putting society on trial."

"Society," Joe said, "didn't hesitate to put me on trial."

Osmond was exasperated. "What," he said, "gives you the right to do this? Open the cesspool of the city, give it to the public gaze?"

Joe thought about it. He remembered the night of the cross-fire on Tenaru River. "I've seen things," he said.

Mr. Osmond nodded, he understood. "And you've been through things."

"Why should it be for nothing?" Joe said.

Oh rot, Mr. Osmond felt like saying. All through the ages there had been dead men, and men back from the dead, and what could be done about it? His own son lay dead on Guadalcanal. It gave him a certain bitter personal animus. "Look here," he said, "you didn't go through anything anybody else didn't go through."

Joe felt Mr. Osmond was giving it to him, he felt like giving it back. "Maybe I did."

Mr. Osmond said, "What?"

Joe took a few steps up and down. "Well," he said, "after we landed on Guadal, the air support faded away. We didn't have any air for thirteen days."

Mr. Osmond nodded.

"Meanwhile," Joe said, "Ron and I were lying there, in the mud."

"Ron," Mr. Osmond said. It was involuntary. Ron, in the mud.

"And overhead," said Joe, "the Japs came in with the planes. It was all theirs, they could do anything they wanted to." He looked up, as if he could see them. "Ron and I had to take it," he said.

Mr. Osmond's round face was set and grim.

"Then they came down low, maybe fifty yards," Joe said. "I could see they were Pop's planes. Pop didn't make planes in order to bomb me," he said. "You stole those planes, Mr. Osmond, and you sold them to the Japs." He was looking into Mr. Osmond's eyes. "That's what happened to me that maybe didn't happen to everybody else."

Mr. Osmond's eyes, gritty, disturbed, looked down. "Ron didn't get hurt that time?"

"Not that time."

"About your father," Mr. Osmond said. "I once offered your father a lot of money."

Joe remembered, he had heard something of the sort, when he was a small boy.

"Only, your father wanted guarantees," Mr. Osmond said, "that I wouldn't sell his planes——"

"To Japan."

Mr. Osmond nodded, corrected him, "To military nations. But in order to manufacture things, I have to sell them. That," he said, "is what makes the world go round, not 1880 morality."

He had an idea. "If you do as I say, I'll make some kind of restitution."

Restitute me my old man, Joe said to himself.

Mr. Osmond, looking at him, saw that the answer was no. The murder idea was creeping back to him. He hated to do it, but, "I tell you this case is going to be stopped," he said. "I'll stop it. Do you mean to go up against me?" He looked at him, the greyish brows lowering over the sandy eyes. "Have you no fear?"

Sure he had fear. It's a thing a soldier learns, if he hasn't learned it before. But he learns something else . . . Joe almost smiled. "Your own son, Mr. Osmond," he said, "taught me the meaning of fear."

"Ron?" Joe nodded. "Tell me," Mr. Osmond said.

Joe told him. He and Ron were on special detail. It was after they had become friends, they liked to do things together. "Well, to make a long story short," Joe said, "we were in a foxhole, there were Jap snipers all around, suddenly I got it in the leg. When night came, I told Ron to make the break. But Ron wouldn't leave me."

Ron, Mr. Osmond thought, Ron.

"It's hot in that sun," Joe said. "And nights it's cold. Our water gave out. Finally, we had to do something."

"What?" Mr. Osmond said.

"Well, there was a helluva night," Joe said. He looked at Mr. Osmond. "Can you take it?" Mr. Osmond nodded. "Finally, we drank our own water."

"You mean——?"

Joe nodded.

Mr. Osmond got up, went up and down. "Go on," he said.

"Well, we were so hungry" . . . he hated to tell it. "Do you mind?"

Mr. Osmond shook his head. "I want to know."

"We ate mud," Joe said.

Mr. Osmond looked at him. "Then?" he said.

"Meanwhile they got Ron."

"His wound?"

Joe nodded. "Well, we couldn't move, but we picked off the snipers, one by one. That's what it came to, we were stuck for one lousy Jap."

"We could still crawl," he said, "so we decided to take a chance. We crawled out—then we noticed something funny about that Jap. He was strapped to the tree, the rifle was in his hands, but he was dead."

Joe looked at Ron's father. "Well, Mr. Osmond, do you know what Ron said when he looked at that Jap?"

Mr. Osmond shook his head.

Joe showed him how Ron pointed to the Jap. "'That's the meaning of fear,' Ron said."

Mr. Osmond nodded. It sounded just like what Ron would say. Indeed, fear was what you were afraid of, in the mind. He got something else—a possible allusion to himself as the man in the tree. But he was sick of that sort of thing. He felt the glow of something bright, shining, within himself. "Ron—was he a good soldier?" he said.

"The best."

"Why," said Mr. Osmond, "didn't you come and tell me these things? You must have known I wanted to know."

Joe just looked at him. "Was it because of your father?" Mr. Osmond said.

"Only partly."

"What else was it?"

Joe looked at him. He wanted to tell him, but it was a gosh-awful thing to say.

"Tell me," Mr. Osmond said.

"You," said Joe, "killed your own son."

Mr. Osmond sat there, heavy, dull. It was almost as if he knew no one would say this unless it were true. Yet how could it be? "Explain," he said.

Joe told him. It was another time they were cut off. Then Ron was wounded again. They had one hope, the communications wire. They tried to use it, but it wouldn't work. "I wonder why?" Ron said, and they tore it apart.

Joe, looking at Mr. Osmond, said, "Do you know what we found?" Osmond just looked at him, tallowish, glum, and cold. "The communications wire was rotten," Joe said. "It never was any good, it was sent out rotten." He saw it now in his mind's eye, the legend on it: Osmond Wire . . . Osmond Wire.

"Ron just looked at it. And you know what he said? 'It's my old man's goddam wire,' that's what he said."

Mr. Osmond was silent. He made several starts, and then, "You say Ron's life depended on that wire?"

Joe nodded. "They picked us up, but they came too late."

"I understand," Mr. Osmond said, "he died in your arms."

Joe nodded.

"And," Mr. Osmond said, "he would have been saved but for that wire?"

Joe nodded.

Mr. Osmond thought. There was a man in the Roman arena, in the depraved days of Rome, a gladiator, a *retiarius*, who threw a net. With this net he caught the head of the rival gladiator. Mr. Osmond now felt that he was the *retiarius*. He had cast the net and caught his own son.

And some of himself.

The grandfather clock chimed, long draughty chimes shivering down the long, draughty hall. Eugene Osmond's murder emotion had fallen away, far, far away, the scattered dust of fantasy. He was thinking he hadn't made that wire just for money, there was a quota he couldn't fill, an order he hated to give up. It was all part of his aggrandizement, his rotten pride . . . he gave up, there was no use talking about it. What he could hold on to, in this moment, were the humanities, the things that connected him with the people he betrayed. That was the lifeline, humanity. He thought of the old days, how he had gone to the shacks along the Monongahela, seeking people, the humanities.

He sighed. "Well, young man," he said, "and what kind of man are you?"

Joe didn't know what to say.

"I mean," Mr. Osmond said, "do you work? Is there anything in particular you'd like to do?"

Joe told him, he wanted to work in metals; right now he was trying to put some things together.

"Things," said Mr. Osmond, "what kind of things?"

Joe told him, a fog-cutter, the ack-ack.

"Fog-cutter?" Mr. Osmond said. "What do you mean?"

Joe told him. Osmond began to look at him with new interest. "Young man," he said, "are you like your father?"

"Pop had big ideas," Joe said. "I just take a bit of 'em, try to work something out."

Well, if his stuff was based on the Jumper's ideas, Osmond thought, he might have something. "Do you need money," he said, "materials?"

"Not right now."

"If ever you do," Mr. Osmond said, "just call on me. No strings attached. Or," he said, "perhaps there's something else you'd like to ask."

Joe thought about it. There was something. Maybe he'd take a chance. He had thought murder played in and out of Mr. Osmond's mind, but he must be crazy, there was nothing like it now, he felt he could speak to him man-to-man. "Mr. Osmond," he said, "there is something I'd like to ask. Why should you help the Squire? He did a terrible thing," he said, "to me and my girl. And finally we've caught up with him. My freedom," he said, "and our happiness may depend on it." He thought of something else. "And there's a baby," he said, "I've got a little boy. I can get out of the whole thing, have a chance for a decent life, do some work, inventing, if only we can show up the Squire. Now why go against us, why should you help him?" he said.

Mr. Osmond's gold-flecked eyes had a sick look. Why, indeed? he was saying to himself. The cracked steel plates . . . my own freedom may be at stake. But one thing was plain, he could not hurt this boy.

"All right," he said. "I won't do anything against you. You go ahead with your case." And I, he thought, will do what I have to do. "Son," he said, "I wonder if we can't be friends. I know what you must feel. And I certainly didn't feel this way a little while ago. But," he said, "something happened. Your father, Ron." And looking into Joe's eyes, "You're the link," he said.

Joe understood, felt himself suffused with something between life and death.

"Did you ever think," Mr. Osmond said, "how some of the dead live on?"

And thinking of his father, Ron, "They were nice fellows," Joe said.

"Indeed they were," Mr. Osmond said.

And now the night was gone. Some of it still remained, but there was nothing to fill it with. "Coffee?" Mr. Osmond said. He expected to go to the kitchen, make it.

Joe said, "I think I'll go along."

"Just remember," Mr. Osmond said, "any time you want anything, come to me. Call me at any time."

Joe nodded. "Good night," he said.

Mr. Osmond took him to the door. And standing there, behind the lace curtain, Mr. Osmond watched him go. Ah youth, battle-scarred youth, with its memories. And its attempt to reconstitute itself. And to fight for something, inventions, a better way. At least in this instance.

Mr. Osmond found a dimness in his eyes, whether for himself, the boy, or Ron, he could not say. One thing he knew. There still remained . . . the cracked steel plates.

CHAPTER II

IS THERE REDEMPTION?

JUDGE FARJEON WAS BACK. He had made a deal to go away, and he had kept it. He had been to the Mayo Brothers at Rochester, then he had gone visiting his father's old stamping grounds in the Rockies. His spine was better and his spirits were better. And lo and behold, upon his return he found a miracle in the city. Stoney Pike had been indicted. On 33 counts. The Marine had put it over. Well hurrah for the U.S. Marines.

Outside of how amusing this was to him, Judge Farjeon had an idea. He was going to try Stoney Pike. Stoney had kicked him out. And his day had come, he was going to try Stoney.

Only one thing bothered him, judicial prejudice. Well, he thought, he ought to be prejudiced against Stoney, any decent man ought to be. But he would give him a fair trial.

Let's go.

As Judge Handley had been the official arranger of the *presidium preventatorum*, he'd go after him. Judge Handley had been the fixer, let him fix.

Judge Farjeon went down the hall to Judge Handley's chambers. It was before court. Judge Handley was putting on his robe, his baldish face with the upswopping nose and intelligent eyes looking out at the leaden day.

"Glad to see you, Judge," Judge Handley said.

Judge Farjeon almost smiled. "Glad to see you, Handy," he said. "Handy, I want to try Squire Pike."

Judge Handley was surprised, but with some aplomb, "I don't know, Judge," he said. "There might be a question of prejudice."

Judge Farjeon nodded. And rather curtly, "Nevertheless, I'm going to try him."

Judge Handley didn't know. Mr. Hilder of the Organization might have a word in this. Judge Fretz. Possibly Mr. Osmond. "I don't know," he said.

Judge Farjeon's watery blue eyes glistened in his pink face. "Handy," he said, "either I try the case or I'll testify for the boy. I ought to be a very good witness as to the powers of the Squire. I'll testify on the *presidium* of the judges and everything else. While we're having spring-cleaning, let's have it," he said.

And with that he went out. He was tired of the city and its iniquity. He was tired of being kicked all these years for being on the decent side. He was tired too of strict observances which he felt hamstrung him. He called Bennie. "Mr. Jordan," he said, "either I try the Squire or I'll testify for the boy. Tell him. Tell him," he said, "to take heart. Tell him there are not merely the wicked in the city. Tell him," he said, "sometimes the decent too are strong." He laughed. "I feel like a blackmailer."

So word came to Joe. And in a manner he did take heart. "Not merely the wicked in the city" . . . maybe they'd get Stoney after all. Though he knew now that Mr. Osmond would have something to say about it.

He was quite right. Judge Handley, not knowing what to do, was taking counsel with Judge Fretz. And the Judge went to Eugene.

Eugene Osmond was not much interested in the return of Farjeon. That only hastened what had to be done.

"Judge," he said, "I've made up my mind. In essence," he said, "a young man and an old man are at loggerheads. We, the city, are in between."

The Judge nodded.

"The young man won't give up."

This was a bit of a surprise to the Judge, but he nodded.

"And the old man won't give up."

The Judge nodded.

"It is ridiculous for us, the city, to be caught in between."

The Judge agreed.

"Judge," said Eugene, "one of these men must go."

Must go. If Eugene said must go, that meant must go.

The Judge nodded. His nod did not signify agreement, merely that he had heard. The eyes of Eugene, from the other side of the library table, were upon him. "Which one, Judge? The young one or the old one?"

Something in the Judge was staggered. The young one or the old one. What was he? Judge? Executioner?

He remembered, the cracked steel plates.

Perhaps Eugene was right, perhaps it was the only way.

"Well?" Eugene said.

He had to answer. He saw now the body of the Anarchist. He didn't like that sort of thing. But as Eugene said, you couldn't run a steel mill without armed gunmen. And——

"The young one or the old one?" said Eugene.

Well, really, thought the Judge, I can't pick him that way. I've done a lot, but not murder, Eugene. The blue denim eyes lifted to the hard, sandy eyes of Osmond. "Really, it's your case, Eugene."

Eugene nodded. So be it. That's why he was top man, he made the decisions. Besides, he had already made the decision. He just wanted to see what the Judge would say.

"The old one," he said.

The Judge was shocked. Not that he liked the old one. He was a thoroughly despicable character. But the young one, who hadn't bent to Eugene's will, strange, this amnesty for him.

But he nodded. Eugene said the old one, it was the old one. Only, "Why that one, Eugene?"

And thinking of the young man, I've come to love him, Eugene wanted to say. "He's a nice boy," he said. Then he got down to business. And looking the Judge in the eye, "How?" he said.

"How what, Eugene?" Then the Judge saw. Eugene meant, how do we do it? Really, Eugene, what do you expect of me, poison, the poniard?

"Suggest something," said Eugene. He said it in an offhand way.

Really, Eugene, it's quite impossible. You don't expect me to hold the gun. There are no legal means.

The Judge thought of something. Just last night Luthe had

come to him. "Father, this will wind up in murder," Luthe had said.

And with his wounded father-pride, retching in gruesome disdain, "Have you come to save me?" he had sneered.

Somehow Luthe looked at him with something manly in those green eyes. "I've come to save myself," Luthe said.

And he explained. His idleness and dilettantism had palled on him. Perhaps he could lead a useful life, perhaps Sylvia would have him, he had been talking to her. He could get down to work—"If only Father, I had something to believe in. If only I felt the root I came from was all right." And his eyes seemed to say: stop murdering, Father.

"Help me, Father," he had said.

The Judge didn't know. Perhaps there was nothing to this redemption. But the Voice cried: my son, my son.

And maybe Sylvia would have him, there would be grandchildren on my knee.

As he sat there thinking, the Judge thought of something else. His Germanism. Why should he eternally play the symphony, money and death? Murder now. And to-morrow. And to-morrow.

He had been the man who killed the thing he loved. But he, like Luthe, was tired of it.

Perhaps there was redemption after all, for him, for his Germanism, for the German nation. Good grief, must humanity eternally be condemned?

Eugene Osmond, looking at him, knew he was going through something. The colour drained from the Judge's red, apoplectic face. His blue denim eyes were more threadbare than ever. He seemed the miller's son, grown old. "A penny for your thoughts," Eugene Osmond said.

The Judge smiled. And with some superior humour, "You wouldn't think they were worth it, Eugene, if you knew what they were."

He got to his feet. He felt physically weak, but with firm strands inside. He felt something else. It was beyond explaining, beyond talk. And standing there, looking at the man who had been his master—

"I can no longer serve you, Eugene."

Eugene Osmond, his tallowish face smooth, his acute eyes quite

concerned, just took it. He did not question, he did not ask the reason why.

"It has something to do," the Judge said, "with Luthe. Something very personal." And faintly smiling, "I'll tell you some time."

Osmond nodded. I survive, he thought. I survive anything.

He followed the Judge down the hall, helped him with his coat. The Judge scarcely looked at him. "Good night, Eugene."

Eugene nodded, opened the door, watched the Judge go down the marble stair. Well, good night, old servitor, old friend. You have served well.

Suddenly you wore out.

Whatever the human secret behind this, it did not matter. Whatever the weakness of the mechanical part that had clunked out of the machine, what did it matter?

You wore out.

Eugene Osmond thought to call it a night. But no, somehow he felt revitalized. His sense of life, death, the macabre symphony of the night, urged him on. He was making himself like his loneliness, he was exultant. He would settle this now.

He looked out for a moment, on the Pittsburgh night, the flames of the mills, this vast drama of fire, in his theatre of fire.

The cracked steel plates.

The Osmond name in the sky. Blinking on and off. OSMOND AERONAUTICAL. OSMOND INTERNATIONAL. OSMOND would stay in the sky.

The Squire, the filthy old man, had to die.

Of course he would have preferred a legal murder. That was what he wanted from the Judge.

But wait, he had it. The hand of the law.

The blue hand, the hand of the bluecoat, the police. Yes, if he could die through something with the police, be shot trying to escape, something like that——

Back in his mind went Eugene Osmond. That policeman he had been interested in, the one who had married the maid, William Delehanty. The Captain now, the Captain at River House Station.

Too bad, he had never meant any harm to the Captain. Indeed, he had helped him. And the Captain had served him

well. But the Captain had made one little mistake, years ago.

Ah, how wonderful to be Eugene Osmond, to have the whole city spread out before you, to have had your hands in the lives of many men, to be able to make them serve you.

He saw something. The Squire had thrown the switch that had started the Marine. The Marine had thrown the switch that had made trouble for the Squire. Now he, Eugene Osmond, would throw the switch that would settle the thing.

The Captain would have to do it.

The dirty old man had to die.

CHAPTER III

THE CAPTAIN OF POLICE

THE CAPTAIN, William Marius Delehanty, was at River House when Eugene Osmond phoned him. He listened. He accepted Osmond's bid to the house. But after he hung up, "Now, what the hell does he want?" he said to himself.

The Captain did not care. He was sick of it, of the city, and the "police business," and his wife, the great big black Biddy and her eternal going on about "the Jew whore," and the priests she ribbed up to talk to him about it.

May God forgive him, he was even sick of the priests, and their going on about it. He was sick of all but one thing in life, and that was Lil.

He saw her now, her ash-blond hair, her violet eyes, the high, delicate bridge of her nose, and her dainty little smile. She seemed to have eternal youth—how graceful and young and pretty she was, for all her years. And her little smiling laughter that was the only thing that made him smile, and the light of her violet eyes was the light of Paradise.

For she lit up for him, it was as if she had Christmas tree lights inside. And when she lit up, he lit up. And for a while he felt the world was all right. It was, as he often thought, 'tis the love drives out the sin.

"You make your own theology, my man," Father Cumla had said. Well, maybe he did. But he made it out of life. And he had

seen a thing or two, he knew there was a devil in man. But not in Lily Adam. Or else, why had the Lord preserved her? Not merely kept her from all the troubles they have, but kept her so young and so sweet? He remembered the picnic they went on, years ago, just the two of them, and underneath the bough she read to him, "A jug of wine and thou."

But it wasn't all as pretty as that. He remembered, it was some years after he had married the great black Biddy, and there wasn't much to it, and he was pounding the pavement, a dirty night it was too, Christmas Eve, and dirty down-town Pittsburgh full of slush and snow and happy people with their revelry, and he feeling lower than a snake's belly. He was rounding the corner into Liberty Avenue—and there she was, the pretty young whore with the lavender eyes. It made him sore, that she should be so pretty. And he was a man in those days with a good, strong hand. Well, he tore her money up, slapped her, and into the bargain, ran her in.

It happened again, and all she ever did was smile and look up at him with the lavender eyes. "Be nice," she said. Finally, he didn't want to slap her and he didn't want to run her in.

Then there was that night he knew he was looking for her. Just as he knew, along about this time, she was looking for him. He had seen her give up fellows when he came along. It was a snowy night, her blonde hair, under the wet snow, glistening like topaz. And her amethyst eyes shining at him. She was jewels. For a moment it seemed she would speak, then she kissed him.

He remembered it, himself so surprised, standing there, uniform and all, he rubbed his lips, rubbing off the kiss. "At least," he said, hardly knowing why, "you could keep off the streets."

Some time later she started a house. And tried to get him. But, "You're not going after a Jew whore," he said to himself.

Then there was that terrible night with the Anarchist. And he went to her. Well, there was no use going into that. It was wonderful, it was terrible, it was divine. And he came out of that night knowing. She was the woman for him.

And after he was sure, he went to Biddy and told her. And Biddy, being a good Catholic, wouldn't hear of it. Divorce. Besides, there were the children.

Well, that's how it was. He went to Lil one night, and looked into her beautiful eyes. "Darlin'," he said, "it's not to be."

And with the amethyst going a little dull in her eyes, "It's all right," said she.

And it cost her something. Well, you might say, a woman like that, what could it cost her? But he was a lieutenant, and she under his protection, and her place became successful and prosperous. And being he hated his home, he began to entertain at Lil's, visiting police captains and such. And Lil's became quite a place. Not merely for Pittsburgh. There was that troupe of Western mayors that came junketing through. And one of them, Ole Fissel, one of them big North-west men, wanted to marry her, believe it or not.

And gave her diamonds. And there was that big Greek gambler, giving her diamonds too. She could get married. And he felt down, hating to lose her, not being able to offer her much.

But one look of her eyes put him at ease. "Don't worry, darlin'," said she. And she put the diamonds in his hand. "You send 'em back," said she.

Between her and him 'twas the jug of wine and thou. And investments, too, they both made. And dreams they dreamed, how they'd get away. So it had gone, for twenty years. And all the time she had been loving and sweet and true to him. With all the offers and temptation. And all those years he had been true to her. And nobody to make them. In fact, the whole world against. And that showed it was blessed.

Only they didn't get away. And one thing she balked him on, she wouldn't give up her place. In a way he didn't blame her, she didn't want to be dependent on him. "Take me away," she said, "and I'll never do a bad thing the rest of my days."

But you know how it is. You go up, the kids grow up, one gets married, one goes to the South Pacific, always there's an excuse. And meanwhile you kid yourself. Biddy'll die. Maybe we'll go next year, you say.

Then something had shaken him. The Marine he had let out because he wanted to do a good deed. And the way the kid had made the fight. By the papers he could see. Had Stoney on the ropes.

And by God, he said to himself, if he can do it, why can't I? Why can't I get up, make a fight? Of course, if he just held his horses, he would get to be Inspector. But rubbish. Let Walter Monahan or anybody else have the glory of being Inspector.

Biddy could have the property, the priests, and the star in the window.

Come the first of the month, he would resign. And take Lil to California. Not the south of it, where you were always running into somebody, but the north, where there wasn't a chance in the world they'd be known. Eureka or Yreka, some place like that. And maybe he'd start a little business, lumber, or something like that. And they'd live in a little white cottage, the roses all around. And the cottage would be up on a cliff, overlooking the sea. The sun on the lavender sea and the light in her lavender eyes, and they'd live in the land of heart's content. And so he'd live out his days. And when he went he hoped it would be with his hand in hers, and his eyes on the light of her eyes.

Such were the thoughts of William Delehanty when he came back to himself, in the police station, and thought of a voice out of the past, the voice of Eugene Osmond, summoning him.

Well, he thought, I'll go along and see what he wants.

As William Delehanty approached the big, dark, gloomy house, "the great house" he once called it, he could not help thinking that in a way Mr. Osmond was responsible for his trouble. For Biddy had been a servant in the great house. And one day, Mr. Osmond, always being nice and helpful like (half because he was that way, half to get his hooks into you) invited him over to the house to meet Biddy.

In fact, though he didn't believe in the stars, or anything like that, Mr. Osmond seemed to have a hand in his fate. They had met on a ship, himself coming over from Ireland, himself in the steerage, and Mr. Osmond up above. Mr. Osmond was very hail-fellow-well-met in those days, swinging his runtish legs over the rail, and coming down to joke and pass the time, as much at home with the steerage as anywhere else.

He himself, William Delehanty, felt a certain condescension in this, and kept away. Then there was the day of the storm, and Mr. Osmond the only one up above, himself the only one on the deck below. And again Mr. Osmond's short legs were over the rail, and his jolly, roly-poly smile and shrewd eyes were looking at him as if to say: you're keeping away from me, you're not easily taken in.

"You're a strong stomach," Mr. Osmond said.

And he, looking at Mr. Osmond, "You're a strong stomach yourself."

Well, that broke the ice. And Mr. Osmond asked him where he was going. He said he didn't know. "Come to Pittsburgh," Mr. Osmond said, and told him how Andrew Carnegie made a fortune there.

Well, he didn't know. Mr. Osmond's talk about iron and steel sounded interesting. Maybe he'd try it. And so, after a while in New York, he tried Pittsburgh. He got to Pittsburgh on a queer day. Indians were going down the river, the fire people were parading up and down, even the Army was there, big floats with people dressed like Columbus and George Washington were going down the streets. People were showering what he came to call confetti. Ireland was never like this. After a while he tumbled to what it was, their Sesquicentennial, or something like that.

Well, overhead an airship flew around, the first he had ever seen. And as he stood there, green as a cucumber, looking up at it, someone tapped him on the shoulder.

Mr. Osmond! To think of it, he knew somebody in Pittsburgh. "Mr. Osmond, sir"—it was out before he knew. And Mr. Osmond, as sweet as pie, introduced him to a beautiful lady who was to be Mrs. Osmond. "And what are you doing?" Mr. Osmond said.

Well, he wasn't doing much of anything.

"How would you like a job at the plant?"

Plant? He didn't know what plant was. "To be sure," he said.

Well, Mr. Osmond was as good as his word, gave him a job, down by the gates, in the Special Police. And he began to see a kind of people he had never seen, the ignorant foreigners, Polacks, Hunkies, Greeks. He, in his clean grey uniform, they in their dirty work clothes with their tin pails. And he, having authority, telling them where they got hired, telling them to move on when they got fired, checking them in, checking them out, down by the gates.

Then one day Mr. Osmond, who could go weeks without noticing anybody, smiled and said, "What are you doing Sunday, William?"

He wasn't doing anything Sunday.

"Come over to the house," Mr. Osmond said.

Come over to the house, how do you like that? He remembered the pretty lady Mr. Osmond introduced him to when the airship

flew around. She was Mrs. Osmond now. Maybe he ought to bring her something, not come with an empty hand.

He bought the roses, saw the "great house," as he couldn't help call it, decided to go to the service entrance. The butler received him, said, "Oh yes, Mr. Osmond is expecting you." And took him to the housekeeper, a bony Scotchwoman with one of those long, bony Scotch noses. After the housekeeper passed on him, she introduced him to Biddy. As he still had the roses in hand, Biddy got the roses.

He and Biddy went to church, he told Biddy the truth about the roses, she sympathized with him, and there you are. He was taken in, he realized it now, by her great health, and his loneliness, and the fact that she was a good girl. And also, that Mr. Osmond approved. "They're both big," he once heard him say, as if breeding cattle.

Well, after they were married, Mr. Osmond sent for him. "William," he said, "there's not much future here. But if you went on the Force, I think you could rise. I'd be willing to help you."

Well, that's the way it was. Mr. Osmond was always picking people, putting them in spots. He didn't understand that then, he understood it now . . . so, as William Delehanty stood before the large house with its few glimmering lights, he felt he resented the house, and the man there, the shrewd man, the destiny player who played with people's lives.

Oh well, what was the use worrying about that?

He put his big hand where the ironwork swirled up to make the O of the gate, went up the walk, rang the bell.

It was the first time in his life, he thought, he had gone by the front way.

"Captain," Mr. Osmond said, "there's a man in this town. He's been a pretty big man in his day, a Squire. He's been indicted on a number of counts." Delehanty felt Mr. Osmond's eyes. "I guess," Eugene Osmond said, "you know the man I mean."

He nodded, he knew.

"Captain," Osmond said, "I think the town can get along without that man."

Delehanty nodded. Very likely. Old Stone, there was no good in him.

"Captain," Eugene Osmond said, "I wouldn't ask you to do this, except there is no other way."

No other way? What was he talking about?

And with the bronze centres of his eyes dull, set, and the mind behind them thinking of nothing but death, "You understand me," Eugene Osmond said.

Do I now? And looking into Osmond's eyes . . . he means it, William Delehanty said to himself. Well now, what's this got to do with me? I'm out of this, I'm free, I'm by the purple sea—

"Captain," Osmond said, "I wouldn't ask you if there were any other way. But you can do it, you're the Law."

I'm the Law, am I?

The Captain sat there, his large, squarish face pale under his once-red hair. He looked at Mr. Osmond, his reddish eyes took on their crusty, smouldering quality. The ashes from his cigar dropped on his suit. He was wearing a blue suit, the Captain was, not with brass buttons, just a blue suit.

"Well?" Mr. Osmond said.

William Delehanty looked at him, his reddish eyes with a glint of fire. "Has it ever occurred to you," he said, "that I'm not that kind of a man? That I can take you down to the station, and lock you up?"

Well now really, Mr. Osmond thought, didn't the fellow have any more sense? "Captain Delehanty," he began—

But the Captain rose. "Forget it," he said. "And I'll thank you for me hat."

Osmond, tapping his stubby fingers, looked at him with an unrelenting eye. "I'm sorry, I'll have to ask you to do this," he said.

Delehanty didn't know what was the matter with him. "Wouldn't you know," he said, "I'm not that kind of a man, I wouldn't want to do that sort of thing?"

Osmond looked at him. "I'm afraid you have no choice in the matter."

No choice, have I? Why you devil, you monster, you destiny player you. 'Tis the back of me hand to you—

But Eugene Osmond wasn't there to say it to. He had turned to the wall safe, was unlocking the combination, taking out some papers. He stood, bulky, dignified, the papers rolled up, like a sceptre in his hand. And looking at William Delehanty—

"You killed the Anarchist," he said.

Yes, William Delehanty almost said, but I did it for you. He was amazed at the quickness of the confession in him. He knew his inner retort wasn't exactly true. He had done it for other reasons. For a moment he saw the waters pouring into River House, the lights going out, the prisoners in their cells, the Anarchist screaming.

"The Anarchist," he said; "his body was washed up in the flood."

"So it was," Mr. Osmond said. "And you evacuated him. Only, before you did, you choked him to death." He was watching William Delehanty intently. Delehanty's face did not move, but the light in his eyes went dead, like a brown clinker with the fire going out. From his papers Mr. Osmond took a picture, a man's neck, with smudges on it. He pointed to the smudges.

"Those are your fingerprints," he said.

William Delehanty didn't know whether they were or not. He felt shocked, trapped. "The Anarchist didn't die of drowning," Mr. Osmond said, "there was no water in his lungs."

You're crazy, Delehanty wanted to say. But something told him to hold it. The devil, he thought, I wonder how he knows. Then he knew. So many times Mr. Osmond had wanted some special information from him about somebody else. And nothing ever came of it in the papers. Mr. Osmond collected these items, probably had someone track him down. But so many years ago it was. And he's saved me up for now.

"It was murder," Mr. Osmond said. "And I have reports of medical examiners to substantiate."

Delehanty smiled. "Even if there was anything to it, you'll not be making much of it," he said. "It was a long time ago."

"An indictment for murder is always returnable," Eugene Osmond said.

"And you might be in a peck of trouble yourself," Delehanty went on, "keeping out the information all this while."

Mr. Osmond smiled. He had the answer to that; the Judge had provided it, long ago. "The information just came into my hand."

William Delehanty thought. He had practically confessed. And now he was glad of it. He hated the dirty, terrible thing on his mind. And he would be almost glad of a trial. He had his part of the story, many people would be in sympathy with him. Only,

there were things he couldn't prove. And he wouldn't look so good on the stand, he, the friend of a woman who kept a house. No, that way he wouldn't get to California either.

Mr. Osmond passed him the glossy photostats of the medical reports, of the fingerprint men. William Delehanty looked at them; yes, he had the goods. Maybe he could talk this over man-to-man. "Something did happen with the Anarchist," he said. "No use telling you, you wouldn't believe me." He looked at Mr. Osmond, shook his head. "But about the other thing," he said, thinking of Stoney, "I'm not that kind of a man."

He looked into those sandy eyes. Doubtless there was something human there, he'd tell the man the truth. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Osmond, I hoped to give up the police business and such. There's a woman, you know."

Mr. Osmond nodded, he knew. It was the old story, the lovers came out second-best.

"She's the woman," William Delehanty said. "If not for her, I'd be willing to stand trial. I don't want to drag her through all this."

Mr. Osmond nodded. He realized the Captain was a decent man. But the cracked steel plates, the OSMOND name in the sky. "Look here," he said, "you do this, and I'll never ask anything of you. You know my word is good."

Delehanty nodded, he knew. But that wasn't it. "I'm not that kind."

Eugene Osmond nodded, he knew. "Just this once," he said, "and you can ask whatever you want of me."

All I want, William Delehanty thought, is to be free.

"You can pick him up," Mr. Osmond said, "lodge him in River House, it can happen while he's trying to escape. But don't take too long about it." Stoney had been calling him up, sending him wires, threatening to go to a Senatorial committee. "Make it soon, Captain."

Delehanty thought. He has me. One bullet, and I get California. Maybe I have to pay. I did kill the Anarchist. But, "If only there was some other way," he said.

Eugene Osmond understood, he wished the same thing. "There is no other way," he said.

The Captain thought it over, thought it over, thought it over.

He saw the night he had killed the Anarchist, River House, and the flood waters rising there. And how he had struggled to evacuate prisoners. The water pouring in from the windows, then the lights went out. Nobody could have blamed him if he had just turned, run for his life. Some cops did.

But he wasn't that kind of a man. He was strong as a bull in those days, and quite a swimmer—By God, he was going to get those poor devils out. So he tried, the water rushing at him as he struggled toward the cells, the prisoners screaming and clutching at the bars, rattling the doors, standing on the beds, going crazy, the Anarchist screaming louder than the rest. Well, being he was a goddam Anarchist, he'd leave him to the last. So he opened the cells, got the others out . . . outside the paddy-wagon horses had broken the traces, horses, prisoners and cops loose in the flood. A big timber hit him, the other cops quit, but shaking off his daze, he went back.

The Anarchist was there, screaming at him, his pale hands bloody from smashing at the bars, the Anarchist, floating up in his cell like a crazy white rat, screaming, "You filthy capitalist tool, you filthy Irish Catholic sonofabitch," stuff like that. Suddenly the Anarchist had a grip on his throat, the grip of a drowning man. But himself being exhausted he had a hard time breaking the hold, the Anarchist still screaming at him, calling him Osmond's tool.

Suddenly he himself, choked by the Anarchist, went crazy, his hands on the Anarchist's neck, at first just to break the hold. But then, his own hands tightening on the man's neck, he got to like it. Mr. Osmond doesn't want him, he said to himself, and the man slobbering such filth, he gave it to him, choking him through the bars.

Then holding him there, I've killed him, he said to himself. I better get rid of him. And opening the cell, he got him out of the station, let him go on the tide.

Well, it was that kind of a night. And after that night he went to the woman. Later he got the hero medal. And Mr. Osmond sent for him, and with an amused light in his eyes, "William," he said, "you will rise."

Since that day Mr. Osmond's hand had been over him, and he had risen to be Czar of River House. Delchanty thought of something. You take a man, you make him, in the very nature of

things, the associate of murderers, whores and thieves, no wonder he goes wrong, sometimes himself does things.

Now one bullet was asked of him.

I'm not that kind of a man.

But Lil. I want to be with her in California the rest of my days.

'Tis the love, he used to say, drives out the sin. Now, thinking of what he was up against, 'tis the love, he said to himself, drives in the sin.

"You make your own theology, my man." . . . So he did.

Now, lying in his big, heavy bed in his home, lying alone and sleepless in the dark, William Delehanty looked around. Biddy had put a new crucifix in his room. The crucifix glowed in the dark.

But that was in the night. In the morning the Captain took two policemen, went over to the Squire's.

Since his various conversations with Mr. Osmond, and with Mr. Osmond's assurances, Stoney felt pretty good. He did not wish to pester Mr. Osmond, or persecute him, he merely wished to get out of his troubles. The cracked steel plates were a whip, a whip he raised, but did not really want to use.

If I could only get out of it, he said to himself. And he thought he was getting out of it, only it would take time. Meanwhile, he put on a bold face with his constables and onhangers, came to his court every day, though there was little business there. But he was acting chipper, and somehow word got around, Old Stone, he would be all right.

And then, before the eyes of the constables and onhangers, the Captain and two policemen walked into the Squire's court. "Stone," the Captain said, "I'll have to ask you to come along."

Stone stared at him. "What for?"

The reason the Captain had brought the two policemen was that he wanted a minimum of argument. "Well, now, Stone," he said, indicating the policemen, "these men are busy, let's go."

Stone looked at him. "You mean it?"

Delehanty nodded. "You're under arrest."

"What for?"

"Oh, come on," the Captain said. He took the manner of a man who had to do something unpleasant, but doubtless everything would be all right. "No doubt it's a small matter," he said, "you'll be out in no time at all."

Stoney saw the eyes of his constables and punks. His problem was to take it like a big man. And no doubt, as Delehanty said, he'd soon be out of it. He nodded.

He was on his way to River House.

At River House the Captain suddenly seemed very busy, turned Stoney over to Lieutenant Carmaly. The Lieutenant turned him over to the turnkey with the swarthy, womanish face. "We'll book you later," Lieutenant Carmaly said.

Stoney found himself caught in something, he was too important a man to argue.

He entered the cell corridor, saw the criss-cross of the bars, heard the gurgle of the toilets. When the cell door closed on him, "What the hell am I doing here?" he said to the turnkey.

The turnkey just looked at him, said nothing.

It was incomprehensible. What's more, not only the turnkey, but the cops wouldn't talk to him. It was, he thought, the kind of stuff that went on when he sent people here. Yes, Delehanty ruled here like a Czar. Bill Delehanty, who derived his great power from Mr. Osmond—could it be Mr. Osmond was double-crossing him? On the cracked steel plates? It was incomprehensible. If Mr. Osmond was double-crossing him, he wouldn't get away with it.

Stoney looked through the bars, a Negro on one side of him, a drunk on the other. Through the criss-cross of the bars, someone had recognized him. "Hyah, Squire?"

Stoney didn't care. His mind was on something else. He wanted to "shed a tear," as he had heard an old Navy man say. But he was too proud to do it here, these guys looking on. He waited. Well, he couldn't bust a gut.

The afternoon dwindled. He expected various lawyers to come through the jail. He remembered another thing about Bill Delehanty, he could keep lawyers out.

Was he doing it deliberately?

Night came. The harsh light fell from the bare bulbs. Stone blinked. The white unpleasantness of the faces made him think of his own. And the way the tin pan of dinner was clunked down. He was strong, able, could stand a lot. But the punks and constables, what would they say? No lawyer, no bail, just to be swallowed up by River House, he wouldn't look like a big man.

The world was squeezing in on him. I'm human too, he said to himself.

Sergeant Wazy came down the corridor. Stone knew him. "Now look, Sergeant," he began. The Sergeant, a tall man with a dark face and deep brown, uncommunicative eyes, said, "It's no use, Stone," and passed along.

Wednesday, Thursday went by. He can't keep lawyers out for ever, Stoney thought. This was true. Lawyers began coming in, but "police-station lawyers," Riordan, Finster, Doubblekopf, they were almost like trustees, the Captain had an old habit of admitting them and using them. Nevertheless, as they talked to their clients, some turnkey or Sergeant Wazy stood by.

Stoney thought Solly Finster was the best of them. "Say, Sol," he said. But Finster, with a look neither to the right nor left, passed by. Stoney knew Bill Delehanty had spoken to him.

How long, oh Lord, how long.

Then one night the Captain passed down the corridor, looking at those he had in his iron net.

"Say, Bill."

Delehanty slowly raised the crusty, reddish eyes to him. "What's the idea?" Stoney said.

And in a low tone, "Orders."

"Well for Chrissake, take me up to your office, let me talk to you," Stoney said.

Bill Delehanty seemed to brood about it, he nodded, summoned Jerry, told him to open the cell.

Stoney and the Captain were in the Captain's office.

"Who's behind this?" Stoney said.

Delehanty, looking straight at him, kept tapping his fingers.

"What's the charges?" Stoney said.

"Charges? There's no charges."

"Why don't you book me?"

Delehanty shrugged. That was easy. If there were no charges, how could he book him?

You know this is illegal, Stoney wanted to say. But the irony of it was too much for him. "How long is this going to go on?"

"I don't know."

Well, what do you know, flashed through Stoney's mind. He remembered something, the way he and Bill Delehanty had been

friends, went on hunting trips with the politicians, even the Judge on one occasion. He had made the remark, about the whore woman. "Tell you, Bill," he said, "if I went a little out of the way, years ago, why I'd like to let bygones be bygones."

The brown-red eyes looked at him, unrevealing as a swab of paint on a brush. Then the light of something got into Delehanty's eyes, bygones would be bygones.

"Just tell me one thing," Stoney said. "Who's behind this?"

"Mr. Osmond."

"Mr. Osmond," Stoney said. "Now look, Bill," he said, "Mr. Osmond made cracked steel plates."

Oho. So that was it. And Stone was going to tell, to get out of his predicament. That's why Osmond wanted to do for him.

Bill Delehanty wondered what he could make out of it. But he kept his "big, stupid face," as he called it, stolid as ever. Stoney, looking at him, began to wonder how good the cracked steel plates were, they certainly didn't raise any indignation here.

"I'd like to get a message out," he said.

Bill Delehanty shook his head.

"I've got to get a lawyer," Stoney said. He thought to send his lawyer to Osmond, possibly to the Attorney-General.

Bill Delehanty shook his head.

Stoney jumped up. "Goddam it, you can't do this," he said.

But Delehanty just sat there, heavy, tired, his eyes like knots of varnished wood. And almost like a mild reproof, "Now, Stone," he said.

Stoney sighed. Well, he'd have to win Delehanty over. It might take a few days. Time, he'd have to spend time. He might as well spend it pleasantly. "Can I have some decent food, Captain?"

The Captain nodded. "You can send out. I'll tell 'em," he said.

"And," said Stoney, "can I have a drink?"

Delehanty opened the big lower drawer of his desk, took out a bottle.

"Can't I," Stoney said, "have it in there?" He indicated the jail.

Delehanty shook his head. "Come in here when you want one," he offered. "I'll tell 'em."

And now it seemed there was no more to say.

Bill Delehanty put out two small glasses, filled them.

And thinking of the time he had passed the remark, "No hard feelings," Stoney said.

"No hard feelings," Delehanty said.

"Well, here goes," Stoney said.

"Here's luck," Delehanty said.

And that was that. Stoney was taken back to his cell.

Time went on. Meanwhile, despite the good food from restaurants, and occasional drinks with his friend Bill, Stoney chafed. He had little against Delehanty, he played chequers with him, sometimes in the office, now and again in the corridor, between the bars.

Nevertheless, Stone chafed. Then he had an idea. After all, he wasn't going to spend the rest of his life here. He was Old Stone, King of the District, the kid himself. By God, they couldn't do this to him.

He was going to force Delehanty's hand. He needed somebody honest. In Pittsburgh, as far as he knew, there were two honest people. He knew a great many people, but as far as he knew there were two honest, thoroughly incorruptible people. The boy, the Marine. And Ned Woolbine.

What the hell good the Marine would do him, he didn't know. Nor did he think the Marine would want to help him. But Woolbine—Woolbine was a newspaperman, he'd give a lot for a story.

In the cell next to Stoney, now, was one Fred Deutsch, a machinist, small-time tool thief, and purveyor of burglar tools. He was a dark man, somewhat dwarfish, with huge shoulders, and live, insolent, cringing, man-hating eyes. For a hundred dollars, with implied retributions if he didn't perform, Stone got the man to deliver a note for him. The man, soon to be bailed, was to deliver the note as soon as he was out.

Late at night, and furtively, Stone wrote:

DEAR MR. WOOLBINE,—I am writing this on a piece of toilet paper, because it is the only paper I can get. I am in River House, and they won't let anybody see me. There is a big story in this. Get to see me, or get me out. And I will give you the biggest story in the United States.

J. STONEHAM PIKE.

Stoney folded the paper, and on the outside wrote: Ned Woolbine, the *Clarion*.

Within himself, Stoney prepared to spring the story of the cracked steel plates. By Jesus Christ, let Osmond go down!

When the tool thief was about to be released, the Captain said, "Just a minute, bring the man in to me."

And Fred Deutsch was brought in. The Captain had nothing against him, he was just another thief, a vile, miserable, enduring species of humanity. "Deutsch," the Captain said, "let me see the note the Squire gave you."

The Captain didn't know there was a note, but he suspected it. It was one of the oldest dodges, sending a prisoner out with a note. Delehanty had gone through the same thing with Stoney's previous cell neighbours, the Negro and the drunk. As in those cases, Sergeant Wazy was around, to search the man should it be necessary.

It wasn't necessary. Deutsch took out the note.

The policeman read it. Woolbine, eh? And Stone had a big story to tell, did he? Why not let him tell it? Only, would it do him, Bill Delehanty, any good?

Other thoughts occurred to him. Stoney's various punks and constables had been around. But not seeing what good could come of dealing with people like that, he had given 'em short shrift. They had threatened to get a big lawyer. Let 'em. He himself had come to the end of a certain part of his rope. He couldn't hold Stone this way, not much longer. And he couldn't—not that.

He had to slip into another phase, possibly a more public phase. Well, why not? Bill Delehanty felt he was feeling his way in the dark.

He looked at Deutsch, handed him back the note. "Deliver it."

"You mean," said Deutsch, "I should deliver it, where it says?"

The Captain looked at him. "Deliver it," he said.

Two hours later Ned Woolbine was at River House, demanding to see the Captain. And when the Captain was ready to see him, "Captain," Woolbine said, "you've got Stoney Pike in here."

Delehanty, thinking he better keep himself unrevealing, "Have I now?"

"Yes," said Woolbine, "and I can prove it."

"Can you now?"

"Yes," said Woolbine, "and I want to see him."

Bill Delehanty looked into those accusing eyes. Maybe he could use Woolbine to pry Stone out of here. Maybe he could use Woolbine in a number of ways. But he must not give himself away. "Now, Mr. Woolbine," he said pleasantly, "what is it you want?"

"I," said Woolbine, "want to know if Stoney Pike is here."

"Yes, he's here."

"Is he booked?"

"No, he's not booked." Delehanty was beginning to get something. Maybe he could stick his own troubles on Stone, and please Mr. Osmond at the same time.

"Can I see him?" Woolbine said.

"No."

Woolbine, annoyed, "What are you holding him on?"

"Suspicion."

"Suspicion of what?"

"Murder."

Woolbine swallowed. "Have you got the dope?"

Delehanty looked at him. "I'm getting it."

Well, thought Woolbine. Thirty-three indictments. \$99,000 bail. Murder. That was a story. "Now, Mr. Delehanty," he said, "does the District Attorney know about this?"

Delehanty shook his head.

Woolbine looked at him. "Do you mind if I tell him?" Delehanty looked at him, shook his head.

"Why haven't you told him?"

"I wasn't ready."

"But you don't mind if I tell him?"

Delehanty shook his head.

"Why not?"

"You're forcing my hand."

Woolbine got something. Mockery. And yet, underneath, possibly the truth. He looked at the policeman. "Will you give me the story?"

"Not yet."

"When?"

"When I've got it."

"Can I have the exclusive?"

The policeman thought. "If I can trust you, Mr. Woolbine, not to publish any of this yet." The policeman was finished, and with a curt nod, "That's all," he said.

"Joe," said Woolbine, "do you think Stoney killed anybody?"

Joe said, "I don't know. Why?"

Woolbine told him. Joe said, "Have you told Lordy?"

"He's seeing Delehanty in a little while."

Joe was seated at his drawing-board, his "junk" behind him, he had just got hold of some new gears, very small precision gears that the Government was selling as surplus. This stuff was so fine that he couldn't help call it "jewellery." With this stuff he could finish his things much more easily. As they spoke, he fingered the gears.

"Listen," said Woolbine, "you wouldn't like to make a little money?"

"How?"

"As a special investigator," Woolbine said. "I think my paper would put you on. You did pretty well on Stoney."

"What would I do?"

"Did Stoney murder somebody or didn't he?" Woolbine said.

"Maybe you could help me find out. And if he did, what are they being so kittenish about? And if he didn't, why are they holding him?"

Joe wondered, he couldn't help thinking of Osmond. And Woolbine, watching him, thought he got it. "Suppose it is Osmond," he said, "why?"

Joe shrugged, he didn't know.

"Osmond's showing him, or Osmond's afraid of him." And Woolbine's large, luminous eyes looked off, his instinct trying to feel its way. "Well," said Woolbine, "how would you like to help me find out?"

Joe looked at him, looked at the jewellery before him, thirty-point gears in the smallest amount of aluminium that ever included thirty points. "Ned," he said, "I'm just beginning to get some place, and I'd like to finish my stuff."

Woolbine nodded. "All the same," he said, "this case is hooked to your case. You started it."

And Joe, thinking of the stuff he had turned up, "I'm sick of it." He was, he thought. He remembered battle, great, clean,

muddy, bloody battle. Sometimes guys went nuts. One guy shot an officer. One guy shot himself. The malaria gave you the shakes, not seeing decent ordinary normal life gave you the shakes, dreams of women gave you the shakes. But somehow it was clean.

But to come back. To see all this dirt spill out. He'd go out and fight again for what he felt in his heart, for what it was up at the farm with Mom. But this goddam stuff. And the beautiful jewellery that could make new life. And to have it dragged down in the mud.

"Christ, I only wanted to get myself out of it. I still want to see Stoney on trial before a jury. For what he did. And if he murdered anybody, O.K.," he said.

"But," he said, "outside of that, I'm tired of it. I'm no bloodhound," he said. "I just want him to go for what he did." And, looking down, thinking of the whole thing, "I don't want to know any more. Honest to Christ, Ned," he said, "if the gooks" (one of his strange words) "came in now and told me Stone was Jack the Ripper, and where the bodies were buried, I wouldn't care. What there is," he said, "is enough."

He looked at the jewellery in his hand. "I want to stick to my stuff."

Woolbine smiled. He didn't know what there was that made him like this guy. Maybe that he was really on the square, not spoiled, not dunked in this stuff. Sometimes, in the City Room, with the ticker, the morgue, the inside stuff, he felt like a strange animal burrowing in life. And maybe he knew too much. It was rather wonderful that the kid kept himself from the destructive knowledge. "O.K., kid," he said.

All the same, he wondered how the policeman was making out with Lordy.

As the policeman looked into Lordy's large, plumpish, greying face, the horn-rimmed spectacles down on his nose, his flat, dull eyes—a nice man, Bill Delehanty said to himself, a decent Irishman. Leads a decent family life. Bill Delehanty sighed.

Now he told him how he had picked Stoney up, held him on suspicion of murder. And though he was willing enough for the District Attorney's office to know what he was doing, "Would you be mindin'," he said, "if I didn't tell all for a day or two? You see," he said, "I've been thinkin' to leave the police busi-

ness. This is me last case. I'd like to break it. Things have been said about me in the city," he said, his reddish eyes looking into Lordy's; "before I go I'd like to give 'em something to remember me by."

Lordy O'Leary nodded. He knew about Delehanty and the woman. Who didn't? And he could see something, a final gesture. The man asked for a little more time, there was nothing wrong with that.

"May I ask, Captain, what kind of evidence you have?"

"Circumstantial."

Circumstantial. That wasn't so good. Still, it worked sometimes. "Anything else," he said, "any witnesses?"

"Myself."

"Yourself?" Lordy said, pushing the glasses up his nose, his eyes wide and peering.

"And maybe a few more," Delehanty said. "But if you'll excuse me, that's all I'd like to say now."

Lordy nodded.

"Of course, I have me greatest hopes of a confession," the Captain said. "You see, Stone and me, we used to be friends. And if he stays by me, if we have plenty of time, if it all happens natural-like, why I think he'll come through."

Lordy O'Leary nodded. This might be smart police work. And he appreciated the way the man had talked to him. These niceties from the crusty old Czar of River House were something. Nevertheless, "Why not book him?" he said.

Delehanty nodded.

"And," Lordy said, "let's have it all regular. We don't want any kickback."

Delehanty nodded.

"And," Lordy said, "as soon as you have the evidence, bring it to me."

The policeman nodded. He thought to say "Good day, Mr. Governor," or something like that. But no, no blarney. Lordy O'Leary was a decent Irishman. And so, standing, "Well, good day to you," Bill Delehanty said. He lumbered out.

The Captain now began to understand the game he was playing. Up to now he had been dimly aware of it. But now he understood it plainly.

Mr. Osmond had pinned the murder on him, maybe he could pin it on Stoney. And if he could, once he got to California, it could hardly bounce back at him.

Now then, what were his chances?

It all went back to that night, the night of the flood, and the Anarchist. In fact, it went back to when the Anarchist had trouble with Mr. Osmond.

After the Anarchist had been lodged in River House, Mrs. Stoney Pike came to see him. And quite a woman she was, in her gipsy way. Well, himself, the Sergeant then, and Stone's friend, didn't quite know what to do.

One thing he had learned from Mr. Osmond and the police business. Take it easy. Be nice about things, if it doesn't cost you anything.

Well, Mrs. Pike, Mace her name was, wanted to see the Anarchist. Instead of calling Stoney, and causing him embarrassment, he let her in.

Well, you know how things are. People do a thing once, they get the hang of it, they think it's coming to them . . . he let her in again. It became a regular thing.

Then came the day of the flood. Nobody knew there was going to be a flood. And Stone came to him.

Stone in those days was a big strong man, and still a good guy, for all he was Squire. And with the big grey eyes, and something sick in the eyes. He knew Stone, knew him from when he was a mill hand. Used to check him in, check him out, down by the gates. Well, with Stone's rise they still were friends. And Stone wanted to speak to him.

"Sergeant," Stone said, "I'd like to see that man."

In the dusk it was, just before the waters began to rise. Orson would remember, but Orson was dead. But there was Quimby and McGonigle, they weren't dead. Quimby was a watchman now, McGonigle was in the coal business, over Tipple Creek way. But they would remember, Stone came here, went down the cells.

Well, he didn't know exactly what Stone wanted. He didn't listen exactly. But what he gathered-like was something like this. Stone was upset, a lot more than he showed. About his wife. As a matter of fact, there were some letters about that.

The letters were like this. The Anarchist wrote her, every day. Himself, Delehanty, was the man the letters were handed to. Of

course he read them. As Stone had cooked the charge against the Anarchist, some of the letters said, "Your husband wants to send me away." As the Anarchist was not exactly a balanced character, some of the letters said, "Your husband wants to kill me." Of course the Anarchist had also used some fancy language about Mr. Osmond. But he had written plenty about Stone.

Fine.

Now he, Delehanty, hadn't mailed those letters, not all of them. The "love you" letters went. The "kill me" letters were home somewhere, at the bottom of his closet.

Good. If they were still there, he hadn't looked at them in years.

Well, come the night of the flood, right before, that is, the Squire was there, wanting to talk to the Anarchist. As a matter of fact, the burden of his song was this: "Anarchist, you're about to go. For heaven's sake, man, before you go, tell me the truth. What was there between you and my wife?"

Well, during the early stages, with the water just damp through the floor, Stone still hung around, using the rising waters to get a squeak out of him. And then, with the water rising, Stone, just because he was some kind of officer of the law, hung around, took a hand, a small hand, in evacuating prisoners. Up to the time the horses were breaking the traces.

Now, then, after the lights went out, and he was still trying to evacuate prisoners—somehow he thought he remembered a flash of Stone's face outside, bitter and white against the black of his raincoat outfit. Maybe Stone hung around, hoping the Anarchist would drown.

That's all he knew. But——

He had seen Stone lurking there. He could say he was getting the Anarchist out. Then the timber hit him, that's all he knew. Except that, years later, he found that the Anarchist had not been drowned in the flood, but choked to death.

Who was hanging around to choke him? Stone. Who did the man say wanted to kill him? Stone.

There you are. Something flashed over the policeman, he might get out of it entirely.

The question was, was it enough?

He didn't know. But he had gone this far, he may as well go ahead.

Bill Delehanty phoned Mr. Osmond, said he wanted to see him.

Osmond listened to some of this, he began to see. He began to see that the policeman wanted to get away, not have this bounce back at him. Also, he saw the idea, pin the murder on Stoney. It was a clever idea. Only——

It would give Stoney a chance to tell his story. "Delehanty," Osmond said, "get on with it."

"Now, Mr. Osmond," Delehanty said, "what do you want of me?" He gave him a hard look. "I'm to go into my jail, am I, just draw me gun, and?"—he shook his heavy head. "Oh no," said he. "The man will have to be booked proper, he'll have to come to trial."

"There can be no trial," Mr. Osmond said.

Bill Delehanty was afraid of that. He remembered what Stoney had told him, the cracked steel plates. In his innermost being, he had known all along, all his trying was in vain. He knew, really, Mr. Osmond wanted no trial. If he had wanted a trial, there were 33 indictments. He had hoped a murder charge would satisfy Mr. Osmond. In vain, in vain. But he didn't want to do it, he hated doing it—if only he wasn't in Mr. Osmond's clutches. Now, feeling a wave of irascibility coming over him, raising his crusty eyes to him, as he raised them to criminals, thinking of his son in the South Pacific, "You made cracked steel plates," he said.

Mr. Osmond just looked at him. "And you murdered the Anarchist."

So I did. We're back to what we started from. Bill Delehanty felt as he had known criminals to feel. He had done one bad thing, and because of that, he might have to do something else. All the same, he was a man, he had shot it out, at times, with murderers, thieves, he was the police, the Law. No matter what, there were ways you had to do things. "Now, look here," he said, looking at Mr. Osmond, "it will have to look like the Squire is going to trial. There are some rules to the game, you know." And he told him, Woolbine had found out, he himself had to go to the District Attorney.

Mr. Osmond looked at him with interest and suspicion. "You can't get out of this," he said.

The policeman didn't know, maybe he could, maybe he couldn't. But just to seem to proceed, "Let me have your documents, the copies," he said.

Eugene Osmond asked him what for.

"I'll need them," he said, "to make the case against Stone."

Mr. Osmond's eyes were perturbed. "But Captain, those documents have your fingerprints."

"They can be changed." Delehanty felt himself sinking in deeper, his feet in the quicksands of crime. He knew a counterfeiter up on the north side who could take out his fingerprints, put in Stone's. He sighed. If only it led to California.

Mr. Osmond passed him the glossy photostats. When will you do it? he was going to say. But he understood, there was a limit to urging the man. And he saw, the Captain might get around to it, some time after the District Attorney and the legal phase had been temporarily satisfied. He looked at Bill Delehanty, his pale, squarish face, the once-red hair, the suffering, hopeless eyes. The policeman said nothing, put on his hat, went out.

Bill Delehanty had a number of things to do, all disagreeable. The counterfeiter. The Anarchist's old letters. And he would have to contact the old patrolmen, now off the Force, who could testify to Stone's being around the night of the flood.

How miserable, how dirty, how low. He had never done anything like this. Was it worth it? He could go to Lordy, a decent man, make a clean breast, say he had killed the Anarchist, stand trial.

He thought of Lil. He hadn't seen her for days because of this thing. And as had happened before, when he hadn't seen her, she didn't call him up, ask questions. Once he had asked her why, and smiling, she said, "What good would it do?"

Whether it was patience or love or whoredom, he didn't know. He came, she set the festive board. He did not come, she dined alone. Or, by her thinness, didn't dine at all. It was, as far as he knew, her one meal a day, a bird and some wine she had with him.

In the red plush room they dined, under the old red shade with the beads. Usually she wore an evening gown. And there, under the lamplight, the reddish glow on her ash-blond hair, her peaches-and-cream complexion, her lavender eyes, well, it was something to him. Here too they talked, went over their investments, dreamed of the time they would get away. Sometimes they entertained, but rarely now. The world was getting more

moral, Bill Delehanty thought, or maybe it was that since people realized they weren't merely carrying on, that it was love—since then, he thought, the world had turned away.

And maybe, in truth, he liked it better this way. Just Lil and himself, and Gert the manageress, and the maid.

In his office at the station, Delehanty thought of the red plush room. Years ago he had been squeamish about going there. But Lil had had that entrance on the side street built for him, and her apartment was walled off from the rest of the place. Years ago, when he had entertained there, he would hear the muffled shrieks and curses through the walls, the bad laughter. Then with the years these sounds fell away, became like the sounds of the distant traffic. He heard scarce anything at all these days.

But somehow he knew he would not go to Lil's to-night. It was men he wanted to talk to. He wanted to ask them what to do. Should he kill Stone?

How can you ask a question like that? The Captain realized something. With his czardom and advancing years and people dying off, there weren't many he could go to. Of course, there were a few men around town, men who might understand. There was Bennie Jordan, the lawyer and Lil's friend. There was Judge Farjeon, the nice, patient judge. But he knew he wouldn't go to them. There was something else he could do. He could go straight to his conscience, straight to the Lord. "Lord Christ," he could say . . . but he couldn't do that. The Lord didn't believe in murder.

In desperation, his mind was swinging every which way. Strangely enough, he now found himself inclined to it. Just one bullet. Into a filthy, lousy man. What difference did it make? The world was full of it. Murder, war. Himself, in the line of duty, had shot robbers, horses, dogs. Why not one more, and be free?

Slowly Bill Delehanty went his appointed way. He made arrangements with the counterfeiter. He found the letters. He dug up the old patrolmen who remembered Stone hanging around that day. He got the evidence that Stone had cooked the charge against the Anarchist. And, more damaging than all, sending a couple of detectives out on a hunch, he found a travel bureau where Stone had dropped in, discussing a ticket to Honduras. And taking his various witnesses and bits of evidence

to Lordy, "Well, Mr. District Attorney," said he, "is this enough to indict?"

Lordy didn't know whether it would hold up in court. But there was little question as to its effectiveness with the Grand Jury. Yes, there was enough to indict.

Now the Captain phoned Mr. Osmond. "Now," he said, "it's your turn. You talk to the Judge, or somebody, and see that he's held without bail. In my jail."

Osmond understood. "I'll see about it," he said. He didn't like it. He felt like an accomplice. But, he told himself, it was the only thing to do. The train of our civilization must roar on, not making any stops to inquire into cracked steel plates.

Unfortunately, he was no longer inclined to ask the Judge for anything. Nor could he eternally mourn the Judge. The train of our civilization must roar by him too, as he stood like Lot's wife, looking back at the burning city. But the train could stop for Handley, Judge Handley was the coming man, he could step into the Judge's shoes. He would have to see Handley, make matters plain.

Thus a man was jobbed who had himself jobbed so many people.

Stone was furious, aghast. He, Old Stone, King of the District, indicted for murder. It was ridiculous, a travesty upon justice, a "frame." For once in his life he was innocent. Up and down he marched in Delehanty's big office. "Why, the dirty sonsabitches," he said, "they can't do this to me." He recognized the worst of it; if only he hadn't inquired about the ticket to Honduras. "I never would have run away," he said, "but you know how it is, I just wanted to find out." And he looked at Delehanty as if expecting understanding, sympathy.

"'Tis a bad day, Stone," Delehanty said.

"A bad day," Stone said, "it's worse than that. And you, you must have known about it. Why didn't you tell me?"

"Well," the policeman said, "you know how it is, sometimes you gotta do what they say. They got a little on me, I ain't exactly a free man."

Stone knew, the woman. And seeing the policeman sitting there, heavy and troubled, "Captain, I wonder if you can help me?"

Bill Delehanty, himself down in the mouth, "How could I be helping you, Stone?"

"I'll need a lawyer," Stone said, "I'll need bail."

"So you will, Stone."

"It isn't the bail," Stone said, "I can raise that. But who's the lawyer?"

The Captain shrugged, his not unsympathetic eyes seemed to say: you know yourself, Stone, the lawyers in this town.

Stone was looking at him, his grey oyster eyes lighting up with that sick-pearl gleam. "Look here," he said, "maybe I got something. Ben Jordan." But suddenly Stone reversed himself. "I don't know, maybe it won't do." He thought of something, he did not want a usual criminal lawyer. This time he needed the best. Maybe Mr. Cosmo Colechester.

Mr. Cosmo Colechester had been a member of the State Department. He was the right kind of front, Stoney was thinking, society, the State Department, only the rarest appearances in court.

"Bill," he said, "let me use the phone."

And into River House, along with the lawyers Riordan, Finster, and Doublekopf, came Mr. Cosmo Colechester. He was a tall man, fine shoulders, a narrow waist, greyhound legs. His eyes were clear, nearly colourless, he had ruddy cheeks, a waxed moustache. He looked not unlike the ever-present gentleman in the men's clothing ads, the fine, decent, courtly gentleman, who looked on while the uniforms went to war.

He was not a type Stoney believed in. But he thought him necessary. And quite willingly, in their interview in Delehanty's office he agreed to pay him a thousand dollars a day. He thought to use him as an emissary, to Mr. Osmond, to some Senatorial committee, to the Attorney-General. But, he thought, he'd wait. Let Mr. Colechester argue the hearing, argue down the bail, then he'd see.

There was no argument, no bail.

Stoney was brought up before Judge Handley. Judge Handley, for all his deference to important people, for all his bald, homey face with the intelligent eyes and the wholesale-grocer look, was an astute judge of values. Out at the Country Club he was persuaded by Mr. Colechester's breeding, wit, and good appearance, background. But in down-town Pittsburgh, with its

wartime tugs, he sensed that Mr. Cosmo Colechester was *passé*.

Besides, Mr. Osmond had spoken to him. And Judge Handley saw a new role for himself, he would supplant Judge Fretz. Besides, the District Attorney, who might be Governor, went on about the ticket to Honduras, not that the plaintiff had bought such a ticket, but—Mr. Cosmo Colechester, trained to the leisurely aplomb of the diplomatic set, didn't know where he was. It was all over before he could do much about it. After a hurried consultation with Stoney, he asked if his client might stay where he was, it was Stone's idea, he was quite comfortable at River House, he didn't know what some other jail would be like.

With his guards and Mr. Cosmo Colechester, Stone stepped into the corridor. And there he saw someone he knew, the tall young man with the dark thoughtful eyes—Joe Drew.

Joe had not come to look on or to gloat. He was, as he had told himself, sick of this thing. But he had started something. And like a soldier, he told himself, he ought to see it through.

As he looked into the white, craggy face of the Squire, something in those grey eyes hopeless and lonesome, Joe stepped up to him.

"You didn't murder anybody, did you?" he said.

Stone merely looked at him. "No."

And Joe, looking into his hopeless eyes, believed him. "What's Mr. Osmond got against you?"

And Stone, in a dull, impassive way, "He made cracked steel plates."

They looked at each other. Then one of Stone's guards nudged him. "Come along, Stone."

Joe stood looking on as Stone was taken away.

When Stone got back to River House it was with a certain relief. After all, it might have been worse, he might have been held in a big, unfriendly jail.

He was delivered to the Captain's office. "Well, Stone," the Captain said, "you're back."

Stone nodded, he was back. He did not want conversation, he did not want to curry favour, ask for a drink. It was all too serious for that. All he wanted was to be alone, to think. "Well," he said, "lock me up."

And Delehanty, an unhappy look about him, obliged.

The toilet gurgled, the plumbing was like a running sore, but he was alone. Strangely alone, within himself. For even the white faces, under the ghastly lights, seemed to fade away. He was alone.

How strange, that in all the city the one person in any way interested, that in any way seemed to care, should be the young man he had almost jobbed. And now he was being jobbed himself.

One thing Stone knew, he would need defence, terrific defence. Mr. Cosmo Colechester, he saw, would not do. And what Mr. Cosmo Colechester had done for his thousand dollars he did not know or care. He needed a big man, a very big man, a lawyer with a spirit, a soul, an intimate knowledge of society, one who knew the foibles of man and the strange injustices of the social machine. For Stone, in his deepest being, felt himself a victim of injustice. And his defence had to be presented that way.

There was one man who could do it, Clarence Darrow. But Clarence Darrow was dead. Where could he get another? Stone began to see something, he would have to put in his own defence. There was an old adage of the courts, "A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a lawyer." He couldn't help that, he would have to be his own defence.

He, Old Stone, would put in the Darrowesque defence. He knew enough Blackstone, he knew enough law, he knew the humanities. And whether they tried him on one or 33 counts didn't matter. He had a hunch they wouldn't try the murder first, it was too silly. But they could hold it over him, dangle it before the jury, meanwhile try him on other things.

And he'd put in the Darrowesque defence. Man is a creature of society. He would tell all. His disappointment in Mace, in himself, the kind of creature he had become. And whose creature had he become—Mr. Osmond's. He would admit it, the Squire business had become like a life of crime. And like a criminal, he had taken to narcotics, the girls.

The girls, the girls, he would admit the girls. As to his war racketeering, which some of the indictments were about, who didn't, he would say, who didn't make money out of the war? And he would tell about the firms, particularly the aircraft firms, who paid men for sitting around doing nothing, wouldn't release

men to the Army, because they made a profit, through cost-plus, on the wages they paid men for doing nothing.

It was their city, their civilization, he'd let 'em have it.

Then he would come to the greatest of all. Finally, he got remorse, wanted to go straight, found out about the cracked steel plates, wanted to tell all—and he was framed. By Mr. Osmond. Who held him without bail, cooked a murder charge on him. Stone saw something. It was all to the good, his sitting in River House, it made his case, he was the victim of persecution, a frame.

By God, he would sit here till hell freezes over. To hell with bail. The worse he was treated now, the more he could make of it later on. Mr. Osmond would go down.

Now that Stone saw the way out of his troubles, he faced another problem, what to do with himself while in jail. He wanted a little fun, relaxation, some feeling of life. An idea was beginning to be born in him, slowly, slowly he began to see a vision of a red plush room.

He had been in the red plush room years ago, when he and Bill Delehanty were pals, when the policeman was giving midnight suppers to various politicians. It had been a long time since he had seen the red plush room. He thought now of Lil in her wine-coloured gown, her golden skin flashing against it, and the girls who had been brought in, just for fun.

The girls, the girls. All his life, because of an early misadventure, Stoney had had a horror of prostitutes. Now they were the only girls available to him, if he could get to them. Suddenly he saw it all in a new light, it was as if unconsciously, all these years, he had saved that sort of thing up for now. Wasn't it wonderful, he thought, while there was life there was hope, a new turn!

The trick was to get Delehanty to take him.

He knew such things were done, though very rarely. But there was always talk in the city, some rich man, gangster, or politician had been let out nights, spent no more time in jail than to sleep it off.

As for the policeman, as far as he could see, he meant to be a good fellah. Of course, he was a little under Osmond's thumb, but that couldn't be helped. Besides, he would appeal to him for old times' sake, just to have a little fun. He would leave the dames out of it, for the present, make it a matter of food, those

wonderful dinners Lil used to get up, and a bottle of bubble water, just the three of them, for Auld Lang Syne.

Delehanty listened. Well, I'll be goddamned, he said to himself. Up to now he had not had the slightest idea of what he was going to do with Stone. But now, he said to himself, he's stuck his neck in it. He could be shot trying to escape.

Of course, it was the oldest dodge in the police business; still, it would work. And as to why he had taken Stone there, well, he could say he was doing him a favour. Or they had dropped in, while Stoney was being transferred to another jail.

Still, it didn't do to give in too soon. The policeman shook his heavy head. "Now, Stone," he said, "I never heard the likes o' this."

"You know me," Stoney said, "I'm all right."

"I know you, all right," the policeman said, giving him a hard look. "How do I know you won't try to get away?"

Don't be a fool, Stoney almost said. He said, "You've got the gun." And he smiled, a merry, wolfish, longing smile. "Aw, come on, Bill, be a sport," he said.

Delehanty wasn't exactly a sport, and talk like that irritated him. Still, it was the way. He didn't much like the idea of doing it at Lil's. But where was he going to do it? Possibly on the way.

"I don't know," he said, "I'll think about it."

All the same, thought Stone, I'll get there. He could feel the policeman wavering. A high glee came up in him. To himself he said, I'm on my way.

And so he was, one night, in a police car, Bill Delehanty driving, Stone seeking life, the policeman seeking death.

CHAPTER IV

AT LIL'S

IN HOMESTEAD, NEAR THE greatest mills on earth, was the house of Lil Adam. It was across the street from the new \$200,000,000 mill. The new mill, possibly the greatest single project of the war effort, had been planned to include the run-down, shantyish block in which Lil's house stood.

Strangely enough, the original plans were altered to please a certain Squire who had a saloon in that block. The saloon was the headquarters of a Numbers business. And of course, the war and the new \$200,000,000 mill had to detour. Some things are sacred. It was in this block, of the sacred saloon and the sacred Numbers racket, that Lil Adam had her house.

Many years ago, how many she would not say—"I'm old enough for you," she used to say to her policeman—Lil was born in Baltimore. Of what, he gathered, were respectable people. And religious. For a terrible hush fell upon the whore-house when it was their sad day. Yom Kippur.

What it was to him that Lil was religious, or had been, or had come from that kind of people, Bill Delehanty did not exactly know. But in his heart of hearts he felt a strange thing. For all the Jew-hating that went on, he told himself, there were two religions after all, the Catholics and the Jews. The others, he told himself secretly, were no religions at all, just talk.

So that even though she had been what she had been, and though she came of a race whose flesh was burning on the altar of the war, as they flung Jews to the flames . . . even so, for all her past, and her troubled race (Bill Delehanty had a strange feeling about her race, it was great, in a way) somehow, for all that, he found a certain consolation, she had been raised in a religious way.

How a girl like that could go wrong . . . she and her friend Gert, who had been her partner and was now the manageress, were supposed to have been kidnapped by white-slavers in Baltimore when they were fifteen. And after that they were too ashamed to go home. Well, that was the story. He never wanted to check it. Finally, he accepted it as true.

It also was some consolation to him that they had not sought the game. And in fact, he was pretty sure it was true. For Gert, like Lil, used no foul language, and seemed to be not that kind of woman, though she was no beauty. She was thin, wore a wig, had thick glasses, and a sort of crossed and roving eye. She looked a little like a mean, department store buyer, or some kind of small business woman, a milliner or something. And a kind of business woman she was, running the place. Lil had practically nothing to do with things like that these days.

What Lil did was a funny thing. She shopped. Often Bill Dele-

hanty had gone through the great stores, seeing the rich women, in all their finery, getting tired, or deriving pleasure, going around shopping. He could see it was a business with them, as they queened their way through the joys and pleasures and follies of the world, that hard-working people, in other places, horsed up for them. Them that has gets, and the policeman looked upon this spectacle with a hard-bitten, amused contempt. "They got the gimmes," he said to himself. But somehow he no longer looked upon Lil's shopping that way. For Lil was shopping for a dream. For years now, she had been buying her "trousseau," as she called it. Over the years she had bought four hundred dresses and gowns and coats and negligees, many of them of simple classic proportions that would not unstyle. And the most treasured of these were never worn, only meant to be worn for him, when they had their cottage by the sea. A long closet ran the length of Lil's house, right between the two houses, and here Lil kept her trousseau.

On a certain Tuesday a magic thread went through the house. Bili the door girl (an old-timer, who sometimes pressed the warning buzzer, but mostly acted as a greeter) and Gert the manageress and the coloured maids all wore an air of expectancy. Lil had told them the Captain would be with them to-night, and bring a friend, it would be like the old days when they entertained.

Lil was glad Stoney was coming. Not for her sake, but for her lover's. She knew a relationship needed air. Two people, no matter how much they loved each other, if they were eternally forced on each other, became like people in a cage.

And so, softly humming, Lil set the festive board. It was to be evening at Lil's . . . in her mind's eye she saw the lights of theatre marquees, *At Mrs. Beam's*, *Mrs. Partridge Presents*, that kind of stuff, and with it she saw the dark theatre, the intent faces forward, as she and her lover looked at each other across the house, that's the way it was when they went to the theatre. Anyway, this was going to be evening at Lil's.

The buzzer buzzed three times. Though her lover would use his private entrance, Bili was on the lookout; three buzzes meant her love had come.

Lil looked at herself in the mirror, and gave a final pat to her hair.

Stoney had eaten his fill, he had drunk his fill, he had regaled

his old friend with stories about early days on the river, he had made Lil laugh with stories of Polish dances he had gone to, when he had first run for Squire . . . he had even taken her off into a corner and apologized for his remark of long ago.

For once in a long time he felt human. And he looked all right. He wore his fine grey suit, a fine heavy brocade tie, he had fresh linen. He had eaten too much to sit still, he was walking about the red plush room, tall and hunched, his bony face flushed, and into his eyes came a pale, simmering broth.

He had not meant to mention the dames to-night, but what the hell, we only live once. And looking at Lil, his long nose hanging down and parting the smile on his thin vulpine lips, "Lil," he said, "how about having a look at the Bride?"

This was a character in the house, one of the girls upstairs.

Lil smiled, a trifle nervously. There was a faint disappointment in her eyes. She had expected this to be a social evening, not vice. She looked at William Delehanty.

Delehanty got the edge of disappointment in her. And he understood. Only, what the hell had he brought him here for? He may as well get on with it.

"O.K.," he said, "let him have a look at the Bride."

Lil called the manageress, Stone was taken to the Bride. "The Bride" was a Ukrainian girl named Sophie. She was a small, pale girl, rather dumpy and pigeon-breasted, and not very young. But she had a specialty. It was playing "the Bride." She would attire herself in bridal costume, white veil, white gown. And so attired, pose demurely.

It was part of her legend that one of the girls in the place, Hazel, had shown her pictures of brides clipped from magazines, brides at society weddings, soldier weddings, Hollywood weddings, brides with plenty of swish, legs, and breasts. "Soph," Hazel said, "the parade's passed you by, they got hot brides now." But Sophie, ever demure—"I'm the way a bride ought to be," said she.

The Bride having been told to prepare, and Stoney being led on his way, Bill Delehanty, with a sinking feeling, spoke to Lil. "Don't let him use the telephone, tell everybody," he said.

Lil nodded, she would. "Do it now," he said.

Lil looked at him, a delicate hurt in her eyes; rarely had he talked to her that way. But she did as he said.

When she came back he was staring at the bottle. She felt he knew she was there. But he kept staring at the bottle just the same. "And now," he said, "make up his bill."

Bill? There wasn't going to be any bill. This was old times, this was friends. Her lavender eyes looked at him, how quickly it had all gone, the Auld Lang Syne, turned into cheap, commercialized vice. She reached for a piece of paper.

He saw how it was with her, as she half-heartedly took pencil in hand. "Here," he said, "give it to me." He put down a few figures, the dinner, the wine. But he had no heart for it either. Good Christ, he said to himself, a publican now. Murder, charging for drinks and whores. What next?

He himself could hardly write. Now and again he stopped, took a drink. He saw the light of protest in her eyes, about his drinking, his stupid struggling with the cheque. "Bill," said she, "what's the matter?" But he shrugged, shook it off, as if he were too far gone for the proper answer. He felt he had to go on, figuring the bill. Stone must not think it easy to get here.

Finally, he had the thing made up. Then he tapped the bell for Gert. And when she came, "Now," he said, "bring me fine bucko to me."

He saw Gert, her crossed, roving eye, with a look of wonderment, disapproval. He knew why. The guy had only just gone upstairs. But that was what he wanted, to dangle these things before him, so he would want to come again.

And in revulsion, good Christ, he said to himself.

Stone was brought down. The policeman took him along, locked him up.

But this dangling couldn't go on; finally, Stone was at home in the place. And somehow, instead of being on sufferance, he began to come into a feeling of moral superiority, at least with regard to the policeman. This came about in a strange way. For one thing, there were the charges. Stone knew they were too big. And for Chrissake, he paying for the dinner every time. He expected the Captain to be a bit of a sport. Then he tumbled to something, from Lil trying to slip him a brandy now and again. Lil was willing to be a sport, the policeman wasn't. Could it be the policeman was the real boss here, hiding behind Lil's skirts, that the policeman wasn't merely doing him a favour by letting him come, but trying to make money on him?

It filled Stone with a strange contempt.

There was another thing. Stone was vaguely something like a decent man these days. Since his troubles, his masculine powers had been on the down-grade, in fact they weren't there at all. But this he didn't tell anybody, not merely out of vanity, but because sex was his basic reason for coming here, escaping the jail, coming into a little more life. He lived these days, really, with the Bride. And as he had plenty of money, paid for all of her time, this was all right with the house. And the Bride kept his secret, in fact he had established a fatherly relationship with her, the first fatherly relationship he had had. For once, in many many years, Stone in his inner being felt he was becoming a decent man. And looking at his craggy, whitish face one night, in the mirror in Soph's room, Stone, he said to himself, you've become an old man.

And with this came some of the dignity of an old man. He not only kept himself clean and dressed well (it gave him something to do, he took a long time about shaving and dressing these days) but he ate and drank with dignity. And this too filled him with a sort of moral superiority with regard to the policeman. For the policeman, these nights, drank too much, he would start the evening in a decent enough way, then drink himself to the edge, you could see the sense flicker out in his eyes, then they would become sodden and drenched, and look like burnt-out clinkers in a miserable rain.

And one night, as they drove back, the policeman driving in that slow, drunken, careful way, hunched over the wheel, his powerful jaws grinding, grinding—"Bill, you can tell me, what's the matter?" Stone said.

Bill Delehanty's eyes slid sideways, then got back on the road. "I'd like to get out of it, Stone."

"What?"

"The police business."

Stone nodded. "Why don't you?"

"Well, I don't know. Maybe I will."

So the policeman dawdled. Then there came an end to his dawdling. Mr. Osmond sent for him. "Captain," Mr. Osmond said, "I am not employing you to take the Squire around and entertain him."

Employing me, is it? Spying on me too.

"Look here," Eugene Osmond said, "you will do this thing this week. You have just five more days. If you don't, Monday morning I am going to the District Attorney."

Bill Delehanty, his suffering eyes looking at Mr. Osmond, just nodded. He went out. Well, there was no help for it. He would have to shoot Stone.

The policeman started to drink. He drank and sorrowed through the night, and he drank and sorrowed through the day. Whenever the edge wore off, he took another drink, brought himself to the brink. So he teetered on the edge of consciousness, murder in his mind.

That night Stone and William Delehanty went to Lil's.

Stone was upstairs.

In the red plush parlour, with the dishes still about, sat William Delehanty, Lil.

Delehanty was not exactly playing drunk, he was playing drunker than he was. It was a good policy, he thought, if anything went wrong, people could testify he was drunk.

So he sat at the table, swaying, the heavy lids down over his eyes.

Across the table, sitting sideways, looking down, sat Lil. What a life, she thought. How sodden it had become. And so soon. Only a little while ago they had played the high string, all through the years. The jug of wine and thou. And then suddenly, with his association with filthy, ugly old Stone——

Where was the lover she had had? He no longer even noticed the dresses she wore. Like to-night, a new one. Was her trousseau for this? Where were the dreams? It's all right, you can do anything, if you have hope. Where was the man who had raised her to hope?

You whore, she said to herself.

She went over to him, the big man sitting there, the grizzled, once-red hair, his big square face, pale, freckled, the long upper lip, and the deep crease slanting down from his nostrils. He seemed to her, at the moment, like a statue with the eyes closed. Often she had wondered about statuary, what there was to it, with its unrevealing eyes. She remembered his face over her, his eyes reddish, burning. She put her hands on his big ears, "floppy ears," she used to call them. She thought of an old song, "Just My Bill."

"Bill," she said, "Bill."

He opened one eye.

Her hands were still on his ears, she shook him. "Bill," she said, "Bill. Wake up, I want to talk to you."

He looked at her, nodded, she could go ahead.

"Bill, are you so crazy about Stoney?" she said.

Bill Delehanty's tongue sought his lips. He said, "He's all right."

"Bill," she said, "don't bring him any more."

He nodded, all right, he wouldn't bring him any more.

She was deflated, she had expected an argument. She shook him, mildly, looked into his suffering eyes, trying to see the man she used to know. "Bill, you don't like him."

He nodded, he didn't like him.

"Then why do you do it, Bill, why do you bring him here?"

Have to, he almost said. He shook himself, looked at her. She had the feeling he wasn't looking at her, merely seeming to, his real thoughts were turned inside.

"Why do you do it, Bill?"

Why do I do it? Christ, isn't it enough? I got to. Without your botherin' me. And I got to, now. I can't stall any longer. Forgive me, Lord——

She looked at him. Something in him froze, as if freezing himself into something he had to do. Then, as if he couldn't make it, some dreadfully loathsome thing seemed to shudder through him, he lost his will, he slumped, with closed eyes.

Good God, what was bothering him, what was on his mind? What could she save him from? Only one thing—murder. No, it couldn't be. Still, she had never seen him like this. Something else occurred to her, whatever it was, it related to Stone. The whole thing, her slump with him, the slump of love, his drunkenness, his bringing Stone here. And this business of taking Stone out of jail. Bill did things, but Bill was a vigorous czar-like man. His was the head bloody but unbowed. Now it was bowed, his spirit crushed, and something bloody about it. Blood in his eye, blood on his soul, that looked away, wouldn't gleam at her.

What was it?

Lil went upstairs. She did not exactly know why, some instinct took her to Stone. He was in the Bride's room, quite comfortable, his bath-robe over shirt and trousers. He had the quality of an

elderly gentleman lounging. There was a suitcase to the side, with some of his things. As Lil stood there, What is this, she said to herself, am I running a hotel, a hide-out?

She waved to the Bride, motioning her out. And looking into Stone's grey, reserved eyes, "Stone," she said, "I want to talk to you. What's the matter with Bill?" Stone just looked at her. "Stone, he isn't this kind of a man." And she told him, Bill Delehanty never used to drink this way, he never made up bills for people, he hated the place. For years he had asked her to give it up, finally they were going away, it was all fixed, they were going to California. "And then," she said, "you come along."

I, thought Stone, I come along. You speak like I dragged him here. I did at first. But recently, he's been dragging me. He drags me more than I drag him.

"Stone," she said, "he doesn't like you."

And he, looking into her lavender eyes, the pince-nez she wore when she was being official, businesslike, seeing her little gleaming teeth, and her generally worried way . . . I'll be damned, he said to himself, she may be right. Delehanty never really had liked him, why should he like him now?

Stone began to see something. Can he be playing me false? Stone's eyes raised to her. "Lil, what do you want?"

"I don't know," she said. And then she got it. If her man really was up to something—she pointed to the window, the fire escape there, "Stone, I wish you'd go, and never come back."

"Why?"

"I'm afraid."

"Of what?"

"I don't know," she said.

For once in his life Stone did not know what to do. "I'm a prisoner," he said. "I'm not supposed to"—and he indicated the window.

And looking at him, "It might be better," she said, "than to be——"

Dead, said something in Stone. Could it be true? He remembered the night of the Anarchist, how rapid the policeman's rise after that. And the Captain was Osmond's man. Was Osmond going to shoot him, with the Captain's gun? It was Osmond's out, there would be no trial.

If only there were one single human being he could trust. A

name came to him, Joe. Joe Drew. He was astounded. But somehow he was the one, the one he could trust. He would like to see him, speak to him. If only he could get word to him, if only there were some way. "Lil," he said, "would you take a note for me?"

She looked at him, nodded. Stone took a piece of paper, on the outside he wrote: "Joe Drew, Potter's Hotel." On the inside he wrote:

DEAR JOE,—Osmond has framed me. I think they're trying to get me. Help me, if you can.

Stone looked up, caught sight of Lil's eyes. Lil's eyes were shadowed, they seemed to say: it may be too late for this.

It was.

Up the stairs they heard it, clump, clump. Bill Delehanty was coming, they could almost feel him, clumping his drunken lumbering way, his great hands feeling down the hall.

Lil took the note, put it in her pocket.

The door opened. Bill Delehanty stood there, drunk, swaying, a morose fire in his eyes. And looking from one to the other, "What are you two talking about?"

Lil looked at him, Stoney looked at him, neither spoke. The policeman waved her out.

"Please, Bill," she said.

He indicated her to the door, and her eyes beseeching him, she went. He closed the door, locked it. He was alone with Stone.

He looked at him, the grey eyes in the white, craggy face, the robe. "Put on your coat," the policeman said.

Stone, never taking his eyes off him, put on his coat.

Bill Delehanty stood there, the crafty, reddish eyes in his pale face. "Stone, how would you like to get away?" And he indicated the window.

I wouldn't like it, thought Stone, I might be shot trying to escape. He shook his head.

"It's your chance, Stone."

That's not the chance I'm looking for, Stone said, but to himself.

Bill Delehanty went to the window, opened it, pointed to the fire escape. "Go on, Stone," he said.

Why should I? Stone said to himself. "Why should I?"

"Because it's your chance."

Stone, his eyes upon Bill Delehanty, "It's not much of a chance."

"It's the best I can give you."

Stone looked at him, the red, brutish eyes, the pale face in grim determination. Somehow, Stone felt, he had been through so much, he could go through this. His only chance was being calm. He felt already a hole drilled in his belly. He set his face, made it firm, grim, hawkish, somewhat accusing. "Bill, you wouldn't do this," he said.

Wouldn't I now?

And Stone, looking into those reddish eyes, was convinced. He's going to give it to me, he said to himself. "Bill," he said, "why should you do anything for Osmond?"

• Osmond, is it? Bill Delehanty studied the grim, reserved, manly Stone. He sees it, he knows. He sees it from me dirty, murderin' face——

"You don't want to do this," Stoney said. "Why should you?" He felt he might yet master the man. "Listen, Bill, I got the goods on Osmond, he made cracked steel plates, you yourself got a son out to sea."

Yes, so he had. But he couldn't help that now. One bullet, and California. "Come on, Stone, there's no use," Bill Delehanty said, "get out." He pointed to the window. The brute rose in him. He had to do it, he may as well do it now. "Come on with it," he said, waving at the window, "it's your only chance."

"You wouldn't do that," Stone said. "You wouldn't shoot me in the back."

The hell I wouldn't. "Come on now," William Delehanty said.

I won't, Stone thought. Then he'd get me sure, and the law'd be on his side. He saw the policeman drawing his gun—"Say your prayers," the policeman said. He'd shoot him, then fling him out the window, it was the same thing, shot trying to escape——

"Bill, Bill," Stone said, his grey eyes with the wan, sickly gleam paying no attention to the gun, but fastened on the reddish eyes. "Bill, he's using you. And I've become a better man. We're all creatures of society"—it was the speech he was going to make to the jury—"you did what you had to do, I did what I had to do, and some things I did because I went wrong. Why should you go wrong? You don't want to do this, Bill. I know you don't."

He saw a hollow light in the red eyes, maybe he was getting the man. "God gave us all something, we don't use it right," he said. "Why should you be Osmond's tool? Just because years ago you killed the Anarchist——"

Bill Delehanty had been nodding, nodding. He's right, he said to himself. What am I, a father confessor? he said to himself. He'll talk me out of it, he said to himself. But at the mention of the Anarchist, something went through him, his finger spurted on the trigger, the gun went off. Bill Delehanty, himself in a daze, feeling now he had hardly meant to shoot, watched Stone.

Stone's white hands clutched his belly. The crimson began to spread on Stone's hands.

I've done it, Christ forgive me, Bill Delehanty said to himself.

In that moment Stone lunged at the policeman—go down like a strong man, he said to himself. He managed to fall forward, toward the policeman, clutched for the gun, turned it into the policeman's belly. The gun went off. Again. Again. Bill Delehanty reached for Stone's throat, was choking him.

Lil was banging on the door. "Open up, open up."

Bill Delehanty wanted to, couldn't move. He heard her screaming at the manageress, "Everybody out, everybody out."

"Everybody out," screamed the manageress, running from room to room.

Gert and Lil were breaking down the door. He felt Lil bending over him. "Speak to me, speak to me," she said.

For an instant he saw her eyes, or were they amethysts? And her voice, from far away, "It's Lil, speak to me."

What can I say? 'Tis said and done. 'Tis the words you said and I said. And Stone said and Mr. Osmond said. That's our universe. And the words Christ said. All we little people, double-crossing God. And the war. My boy in the Pacific. And Biddy, she never meant me no harm. And me daughter. Goodbye, all of you. 'Twas nice. And the nicest, and the most foolish, was the lavender eyes. If only she'd get me a priest.

"Speak to me, speak to me," Lil said.

"A priest," he said.

Lil got a priest. She got a doctor. She got Lieutenant Kilgallen and Sergeant Wazy. She even called Stone's wife. And these people came and saw, the Squire and the Captain, the Law and the Police, on the whore-house floor.

DEATH IN THE SPRING

IT WAS A SENSATION THAT rocked the city. Not that all the facts were known, Lieutenant Kilgallen saw to that. But an old pattern was followed, it was announced that the Squire was shot trying to escape. It was indicated that he had been shot outside, he was in the Captain's car, the Captain was taking him to another jail, and as they passed by, Stoney made a break for Lil's.

Lil's was in the papers, the photo touched over with various dotted lines, showing Stoney's zigzag course as he tried to escape. X marks the spot from which Captain Delehanty went after him, X marks the spot from which Stoney, turning on Captain Delehanty, had shot him.

In the drama-photo, as the *Clarion* called it, you could see Stone and the policeman in the gutter, lying side by side. So the "cartographers of our society," as Woolbine called them, traced the passage of souls.

And on an inner page were the obits. It is a commonplace of newspaperdom that the obituary notices of important people have been long prepared. And when death comes it needs only an indifferent hand to take the cold type and slug it into the press.

But this once it was different. Woolbine had known both men. He wrote a wonderfully colourful résumé of the policeman's life, and he outdid himself on Stoney. He portrayed Stoney's rise, the Christmas baskets, the way Stone was King of the District, his troubles at the end. He put Joe in the story, and he headlined this part: "Marine Catches Up with Him."

At the end of each story Woolbine gave the name of the cemetery in which the policeman was to be buried and the cemetery that would hold Stone. The interment would take place in a couple of days.

It was a "running story," which meant that the papers carried more story from edition to edition and from day to day. The rest of the story concerned the fact that Lil's place had been padlocked; the pictures featured the padlock.

Joe's reactions to all this were strange. In a manner of speaking he was responsible for the death of these men. If he hadn't started this case, doubtless both men would be alive to-day.

"You don't want to feel that way, Joey," Stell said.

He didn't want to feel that way, but the edge of it was there. He thought of another thing. His case against the Squire had disappeared, the Squire's case against Mr. Osmond had disappeared. What was left was the Squire's case against him. He called Bennie up about it.

"Well," said Bennie, "it's still there, but I guess we can rub it out. Though we better wait till after the funeral." Then he said something else. "Stoney," he said, "left a letter for you." And he told him, Stoney had left a letter with the woman who had run the house.

"Where is it?"

"I don't know," said Bennie. "Lil's bringing it."

"You know her?" Joe said.

Bennie smiled. "For over twenty years."

All her life Lil had been submissive. But now, with her lover gone and her house padlocked, she regarded it as a deliverance, to use his kind of word.

When they had first taken him away, and all the girls had gone, Lil sat on the floor of the empty whore-house. It was an old Jewish custom, to sit on the floor, mourning the dead, putting ashes on your head. Lil did not sit on the floor the seven days prescribed by Mosaic law, nor did she put ashes on her head.

But she sat there, cold, hurting her bones. I'm a bad woman, she said to herself, it's God's punishment. She thought of Bill Delchanty, the man she had loved, and all the things she had hoped for.

There remained only the tatters of the whore-house, the tatters of her life.

Downstairs in the long closet were four hundred dresses. Four hundred dresses and costumes she had bought for her life with him, her "trousseau" for that cottage by the sea. Now there would be no cottage, no sea. And of all those dresses only one she could wear. The black mourning costume she had bought should he go first. And she was going to wear it. A fixed idea was forming in her mind.

She was going to the funeral.

It was a public funeral, and as Lieutenant Kilgallen was making the arrangements, she told him what she wanted. She

wanted a limousine, up front, near the head of the procession. "Are you crazy?" Lieutenant Kilgallen said.

Lil didn't know, maybe she was. But also, she told herself, she was crazy like a fox. Just in case anything went wrong, just in case anybody should want to make trouble, there was one man she wanted to see, her lawyer, Bennie.

Lil arrayed herself in her "widow's weeds" and went through the city.

It was strange, Bennie thought, how pretty she was in her black. And still a blonde, with the lavender eyes. Still thin and shapely, a doll. But an old doll. There was something waxen to her face, something old and waxy about her cheeks. She raised her veil. Her eyes, dull and dirty from crying, were like dirty amethysts. He remembered, long ago, himself a kid out of law school, she a dame in trouble about her first pinch.

At first she said nothing, merely took the letter out of her purse. He read it. He knew Stone's scraggly hand. "Is that all?" he said.

She nodded. "He was going to write more. Then Bill came into the room."

Bennie put the letter in his pocket. But Lil had not come about the letter. And now, her eyes looking off in the twilight, "Ben, I'm going to the funeral."

Ben Jordan felt jolted. He thought of the wife, the Irish Catholic wife, the police, the priests. "You sure you know what you're doing?"

"I was his legal mistress," she said. "They can't keep me away."

If it weren't so sombre, Bennie could have laughed. There was no such thing as legal mistress, though he had heard it before. It was strange, he thought, how these dames tried to deck themselves out in made-up legality. And, he thought, she needn't fool herself, there would be plenty of police, she would be hustled away. "Think it over, Lil," he said.

She looked at him, shook her head. And quite delicately, "I know a couple of things."

He nodded.

"He wasn't shot trying to escape, he was shot in the house. Bill didn't want to do it," she said. And she began to cry.

He looked down, letting her cry. Nor did he question her. It

all comes out, he told himself, sooner or later it all comes out.

And now, having finished her crying, "Ben, are you going to the funeral?"

He shook his head, no, he hadn't thought to go.

And she, appealingly, "Please, Ben, for me?"

"What's on your mind, Lil?"

But she shook her head, she wouldn't speak.

He understood, now, the reason for her visit. She had some tactic in mind for the funeral. And she wanted him to stand by. "O.K.," he said, "I'll go."

She nodded thankfully, her delicate fingers adjusted the unfamiliar veil, she was gone. Ben Jordan looked out at the Bridge of Sighs. A line occurred to him: Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. What things he had seen in this office.

He called Joc. "Listen, Joe," he said, "I'm going to Bill Delehanty's funeral to-morrow. Meet me there. I'll give you the letter."

Joe went to the policeman's funeral. He did not go merely because Bennic had suggested it. Delehanty had been very nice to him, and he went, in a manner, to pay his last respects. He went too with a curious feeling. Suppose Delehanty had not been that nice to him? Suppose he had been held in River House or some outlying lock-up for a good long time? It was like the thought he had had out on the Islands. Suppose he had landed in some Jap jail, how long would his morale have kept up? Anyway, William Marius Delehanty had been nice to him, and in a way he was responsible for his death.

Stell, her beautiful blue eyes looking at him, seemed to sense what he felt. And pressing his arm, "Joey, I wish you wouldn't feel that way."

He shook it off, looked on at the funeral.

The funeral of William Delehanty was quite a spectacle. There was an honour guard of police, many of the old-timers of the Force turned up, and men who had been in politics. There were, besides, representatives of the societies the policeman had belonged to. Years ago, before he had fallen from grace, William Delehanty, in his loneliness, had joined societies.

There were mobs of the curious. And as the deceased's daughter

was now a fairly wealthy and prominent woman, much interested in the schools and convents to which she had gone, there was quite a human tide accompanying her. And the widow, large, sobbing, red-faced, heavily in black, having to be led, sincerely mourning William Delehanty, for all he had not been the husband she had hoped.

Stell, always highly emotional about churches and funerals, said, "Come on, Joey, let's go inside." But he shook his head, smiled at her, accepting the idea that she would go in. He stayed outside, talking to Bennie and Woolbine.

The three of them looked at the Squire's letter. How strange, Joe thought, that the man had written him. He saw Stone, the tall stooped figure, the hawkish face, the grey eyes . . . at this moment being buried in another part of the city. He saw something. Stone and himself, both part of America. Both born up-state, Stone in the next county. And Stone had good things about him, he was forceful, intelligent. But Stoney had gone wrong. He had come to represent things that were intolerable. And somehow life had disposed of him. Or Osmond. "A big fascist getting rid of a little fascist," Woolbine said.

Joe wondered, was that all it was?

He became aware now that something was happening.

The casket was being borne to the hearse. As the widow, supported by Lieutenant Kilgallen and the priests, was slowly helped to her limousine, a small blonde woman dressed in black seemed to appear from nowhere.

Mrs. Biddy Delehanty stopped in her tracks. Her large black eyes looked out of her red, swollen, sorrowful face. She merely stared at her rival, could say nothing.

"What are you doing here?" Lieutenant Kilgallen said to Lil.

But Lil, paying no attention to him, spoke to the widow. "Forgive me, Mrs. Delehanty," she said. "I'm sorry."

Mrs. Delehanty stared.

"Please, Mrs. Delehanty," Lil said, "let me go to the grave."

But the police shoved her aside. She looked at Bennie, appealing. He did nothing. The police hustled her away.

"Who is she?" Joe asked.

Bennie shook his head. "Not to-day," said he, threw his hand up in drooping farewell, went on his way.

Joe looked into Woolbine's dark sombre eyes. "What's the dope, Ned?"

Woolbine liked him, he had always liked him, but he too had undergone a strange revulsion to the woman's final bid for a place in life. Her place in life, he thought, came through death. Briefly, he told Joe the few facts, she was Bill Delehanty's mistress, she had kept the house. And, looking after the departing limousines, "My God, what a story," Woolbine said, "you could tell the whole story of the city through the rise and fall of a policeman."

Joe looked into his deep eyes, he knew Woolbine was speaking not as a newspaperman, but rather as the novelist he wanted to be. "Why don't you write it, Ned?"

Woolbine smiled. Why didn't he write it? So many times he had asked himself that. "Maybe I will," he said.

There was another thing Joe wanted to know. "Ned, what did Mr. Osmond have on Mr. Delehanty?"

Woolbine knew the answer, the Anarchist. But he shook his head. "The last time I saw you, Joe, you had the right dope. You yourself realized it's bad to get in too deep."

He looked about, at the sunlight on the beautiful grey stones of the church, at the forsythia blossoms, tender, yellow and delicate. "Look, Joe," he said, "it's spring."

Joe looked, it was spring, in every tender delicate budding leaf.

"Look here," Woolbine said. "We've had death in the spring. Stoncy's dead and Bill Delehanty's dead. Let's call it the end of an era."

"You think it is?" Joe said.

"Let's hope so. And don't worry about it," Woolbine said. "Begin to live. Instead of looking at the bottom of things, begin to look at the top." His eyes were warm, friendly. "Let me tell you something, Joe." And Woolbine told him something that only a man of deep newspaper experience can know. "When you know too much," he said, "you have to die."

And his eyes gleaming at Stella and Joe, as if giving them his blessing, "Now go on, kids, go home."

Joe, looking at him, felt him lonely and sombre. "What are you going to do?" he said. He thought to take him for a beer or a coke.

"Who, me?" Woolbine said. He smiled. He thought of his deep

useless culture. "Oh me, I'm a ghost, I'm going to stay here and haunt myself."

And then, as if exercising the authority of a spiritual policeman, "Now go on, beat it, go home, be happy," he said.

Joe and Stella started on their way. They went to the street-car tracks two blocks away, stood waiting. Stella couldn't help being moved by the lonely figure of Woolbine, standing outside the church, looking up at it. "Joe," she said, "what's he doing?"

Joe shrugged. "Search me," he said.

As a matter of fact, Woolbine was praying. He had rarely prayed inside a church. But once in a great while he had prayed outside. "Why can't I, God?" he said. "Why can't I?"

He meant write. In a great big way. A novel, a real novel. For more than twenty years he had been the town chronicler. I'm a man, God, he said. I've got imagination, I can write. I'm part of this civilization. I know every crumbly brick and cobble in this town. I've cried my heart out on every wretched whore and Polack. I know the story, the whole story, from Osmond down to some blabbering coloured imbecile. It's my civilization, my town, my cross, my crucible. I'm part of it, God. Why can't I write it, put it down?

He meant his prayer not only for himself, but for other newspapermen, in their ill-fitting suits, hardened and stony with the impact of the news, hanging around the courts, dutifully heralding each judge, mayor, criminal. Was their vast knowledge, lore, store of memories to be forgotten?

Why can't I, Lord, why not I?

He was different, set apart, he knew the culture of the world as well as he knew the spittoons of the courthouse, he knew Balzac, Chekhov, Dickens, Proust, Thomas Wolfe.

I'd be willing to, Lord, I could try, there's nothing to stop me now. He remembered the things that had stopped him, his wife's accusing eyes when they had the abortion because they couldn't afford the baby, the lunches he had gone without to preserve an exterior of respectability. But now, with the Guild, they could get along in a modest way. And now they knew there never would be a baby. The only baby he could ever have would be his book.

He started home, thinking of Delehanty, Stone, Bennje. The boy and girl. About them the city, the civilization. It was all

there. My God, how he knew it. All he had to do now, evenings, was to write.

And now, with great sadness, great pain, he knew he never would. He would no more write his book than the Three Sisters would get to Moscow. And he knew why.

He was immobilized. By all his knowledge. By every dirty stone. By the echoing laughter of that whore that had flung herself into the Allegheny. By his knowledge of the criminals with whom Bill Delehanty had shot it out on Herrs Island.

He knew too much. He was immobilized. It was as he had said to Joe, if you know too much you have to die.

So he would die, slowly, gently, pleasantly through the years. With his book the memory within, the dearly beloved pain. While others went on, the boy, for instance, the nice, not too bright, hard-bitten boy, with his mechanical aptitude, he would be an active ingredient in life.

And he himself, in the lone nights, examining his dearly beloved book, his cancer, his tumour, beloved, and unremoved within.

This too, he thought, was death, death in the spring. 'Tis not merely the dead who die, he said to himself, the living die too.

He stopped, bought some flowers for his wife.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE BEGINS

JOE WAS WORKING one morning when he had a strange visitor. His visitor was Mr. Osmond.

Mr. Osmond was in one of his periods of disturbance. He was disturbed about the Squire and the policeman. To him Stoney was a sort of cosmic bum, reeking with much of the good and bad of humanity. He had liked him. Even liked the hair of the dog in him. As an engineer he was pleased that this human entity no longer disturbed the vista of perfection. As a human being he was sorry that the cosmic bum was gone. And he was more than sorry about the policeman. He had meant him no harm. The passing of Captain Delehanty revealed the perpetual flaw in the human machine, in the plans of mice and men.

As had happened before in his life, when Mr. Osmond felt himself in an atmosphere of disturbance, he sought the humanities. But not, this time, in the shacks along the Monongahela, but rather in a dusty little human hive known as Potter's Hotel. Ah, the son of the inventor there, the young man that had made so much trouble, the human cradle that had held Ron in Ron's last shuddering response to life. And he had an old and smiling excuse: How was the young man getting on with his inventions?

As Joe beheld the rather stocky, dignified, benign face and figure of Mr. Osmond, he almost smiled. He remembered how Mr. Osmond had come out to the farm many years ago, to see Pop's stuff. He remembered him coming to their apartment in Mill District. And he remembered something else, he remembered that the murderer goes back to the scene of the crime. For he, Joe Drew, in a manner of speaking, was the originator, the stamping ground of the crime.

Just as this man was its perpetrator.

But Mr. Osmond, in his shrewd, genial way, alluded to nothing like that. His sandy eyes were smiling, his healthy, tallowish face as smooth, beneficent, and dreamy as Buddha's. After a few preliminary remarks he indicated the inventions, went toward them with the amused lust with which another sort of man would approach girls. He fingered the metal arms and breasts of the inventions, caressed them with his stubby hands. And just as another sort of man, from what little had been told him, instinctively knew this was Marjory, Jenny—"The fog-cutter," Mr. Osmond said, "the ack-ack."

Joe felt himself drawn in, by his love of these things, by his hopes for them. He nodded, explained what was to be explained, not talking very much, just slipping in a word while demonstrating. And Mr. Osmond, though pleased, just like the man who could never get enough girls, now indicated some of the things at the side and said, "What are these?"

"Did you ever change a tyre?" Joe said.

Mr. Osmond nodded. As he had wanted to do all things, he had had his chauffeur stand aside on occasion while he changed a tyre.

"Did you," said Joe, "ever see a sensible automobile jack?"

Mr. Osmond's shrewd eyes twinkled at him in an amused way, he shook his head.

Joe indicated his automobile jack. "That's sensible," he said. And he showed Mr. Osmond how it worked. It was built along the principle of the kind of jack you see in garages, you push it under the car, give two small jerks to the handle, and the car is up. Only instead of weighing a hundred pounds, and being a big bulky thing like a garage jack, in aluminium and magnesium it weighed five pounds and folded up on itself so that it was more compact than the jack that went with the average car.

Mr. Osmond nodded, and it put him in mind of something. "Look here," he said, "your fog-cutter, outside of what it would do up in the air, do you think we could put it on automobiles?"

Joe wondered. As there wasn't a good fog-lamp that he knew about, and as it was possible, "Maybe."

Mr. Osmond smiled. "Now you're talking," he said. He trifled now with Joe's new idea for housing, the glass and metal house. The walls of glass were to face the sun, and absorb sun heat, this heat to be saved up during the day and be radiated through the house at night, by the metal walls. A house of this sort would need no additional heating arrangement in southern California, though a heater could be installed. In Michigan, however, the house would come with a heater, though not an obvious one, the heater and radiating system being panels in the metal walls. "Particularly nice," Mr. Osmond said, "when we get a cheap way of heating by electricity."

And now, looking at the mechanistic clutter that grew in the bay window, as, he thought, some people grew a bower of strange plants, "They're pretty rough," said Mr. Osmond.

"I didn't have much time."

Mr. Osmond nodded. "Where did you get the ideas?"

"From my father."

Mr. Osmond nodded. Well, the Jumper always did have good ideas. And Osmond Research could straighten all this out. And he did want something with this boy. "I'll take them," he said.

Joe sat there. He had come to something. He hadn't made these things just for nothing. And here was a chance, perhaps the only chance he would get. Only, Mr. Osmond. Mr. Osmond stuck in his craw.

And Mr. Osmond, standing there, shrewdly observing him, now smiling, "I hear no cheers," said he.

Joe smiled, in recognition of the humour. But he looked at Mr. Osmond with considerable scepticism.

"What is it?" Mr. Osmond said.

Joe didn't know how to say it. He felt his total inadequacy with a man like Mr. Osmond. He felt his plainness, his dullness, in the face not only of Mr. Osmond's engineering abilities, but of his vast culture, experience. There was another thing. Mr. Osmond made a split personality out of him, there was so much about Mr. Osmond that he was forced to respect, so much that he couldn't take.

"Well?" Mr. Osmond said.

"It's funny," Joe said, "but I don't know what to say. I'm very grateful that you came here, and that you like my stuff——"

"Only?" Mr. Osmond said.

And looking at him, "I guess I don't like you," Joe said.

Mr. Osmond smiled. He knew the young man didn't like him, and he knew why. But just to keep himself amused, and to go on with it, "No," he said, "why not?"

Joe thought of his father, his father's inventions, Ron. "You cheated me," he said. "It seems like you always cheated me. And now you've cheated me on the Squire."

"The Squire?"

"I was after the Squire," Joe said, "but I didn't want to kill him. You see, Mr. Osmond, if I had wanted to kill him, I could have killed him long ago." He saw Mr. Osmond, heavy-lidded now, the bronze centres of his eyes like bullets. "I could have taken him alive," he said. "You had to have him dead."

Osmond just looked at him. "Why," he said, "be concerned about the passing of the Squire?"

Joe wondered. There was a reason. "You see, Mr. Osmond," he said, "I wanted to see Stoney in the courts. I wanted to see if it would work."

"What?"

Joe wanted to say Justice, the Law. "The things I was brought up to believe in, the Law. I wanted to see if it would work." And looking at Mr. Osmond, "That's what you cheated me out of." He had a thought. "I wanted to see Stoney punished for his crimes, not for your crimes."

He had another thought. "I had the Squire," he said, "I had the victory. You made it the Lost Victory." He wondered, for

a moment, whether Mr. Osmond and others like him might make the war a Lost Victory, a military triumph but otherwise something hollow.

As Mr. Osmond got the impact of Joe's words, emotions, something in his belly billowed in. As if he had been machine-gunned. But he recovered his aplomb. Well really, he thought, I did not come here to be abused. He has gall. He's still not out of his case—the sardonic quality of it came to him now, the young man's case against Stoney was gone, Stoney's case against the Osmond Enterprises was gone, but the case against the young man still remained. The Judge, or Judge Handley, possibly, could make trouble for him. But there was something else, a higher crime. The young man was offending Eugene Osmond. And being a bit of a bore. They had already gone through the crimes of Eugene Osmond, had a whole evening of it. Out of the young man's memories of Guadalcanal came the net, the *retiarius* with which he had caught his own son. And some of himself.

Osmond thought to go. But something held him. The young man with his talents, his experiences, his gall, his slow struggling intelligence, was—humanity. The life line. Somehow, possibly because of Ron, he liked the young man. And indeed, why retreat before him?

"My crimes," Mr. Osmond said, faintly smiling, "is there any more to be said of them?"

Joe thought there was. "You made cracked steel plates," he said.

Indeed. So the Squire had told him, or he had somehow found out. "Now listen, son," Osmond said, "that was a very small percentage. I made a great many plates that weren't cracked. I made good wire too. I've paid in my soul for those things. I can't bring back the dead." And staring at him with his sandy, globular eyes, Osmond started up and down, his great body propelled by the runtish legs. This was no slave soul, he was thinking, this was a young man who said what he felt. It was the forthrightness Ron had had, even poor ineffectual Luthe, and Sylvia too. It was the strain he loved, the strain in good horses and dogs. Mr. Osmond felt something, this is my own. If only he could make contact with the young man. He looked at him now, almost with a plea, "The dead are dead. What do you want me to do about it?" he said.

Joe didn't know. He thought of his insufficiency, of the insufficiency of words under certain circumstances. "I don't know," he said.

"Now look here," Mr. Osmond said, "for some silly reason I like you. I don't know, maybe it's Ron." Joe saw the memory of Ron in Mr. Osmond's eyes, Mr. Osmond turned away. And then, indicating the stuff in the window, "Your stuff's got potential, though it ought to be straightened out. I'd like to get hold of it. Not that it matters so much to me. I'll make a living without it."

Joe smiled.

"But I'd like to get together with you," Mr. Osmond said.

And in a strange way, Joe felt some of the same thing. There was too much between them, for good and for bad, his father, Ron. And maybe, in a strange way, he could be more persuasive with Mr. Osmond than with other manufacturers. He would see. The man had offered him something, maybe this was his chance. He went to his inventions, and putting his hands on them, "This ack-ack and this fog-cutter, they might be good," he said.

Mr. Osmond nodded.

"But," said Joe, "I don't want the thing that happened to Pop to happen to me."

And almost offended, "You're not worried about money," Mr. Osmond said. Really, he thought, if this boy behaved himself he'd give him all sorts of money, he might even leave him some.

"It isn't money," Joe said. "You're in the cartels, Mr. Osmond. I could give you my fog-cutter and the ack-ack, and before I knew it, they could turn up in Germany and Japan, like Pop's planes."

He saw Mr. Osmond, the heavy lids down over the eyes, the eyes going grim again. He went on, "There's another thing. I don't know how to tell you, but I've got a girl. I guess I ought to be married. I'm not much of a father," he said, "but I've got a little boy. He troubles me." Mr. Osmond saw him serious, worried. "This is what it comes to," Joe said. "I was born in the last war, while my father was in France." Mr. Osmond nodded, he knew. "My kid was born in this war when I was on Guadalcanal. Now, Mr. Osmond," he said, "about twenty years from now, is my kid going to be lying in the mud some place? Or maybe he'll be flying," he said, "and my ack-ack will shoot him down."

Mr. Osmond frowned. Intolerable as it was to listen to, he

thought, it might be true. Still, the only way to get together with this young man was through simple human exchange. "Now listen," he said, "in times of peace would you be willing to have your fog-cutter on all planes?"

Joe nodded.

"Well, in times of war," Mr. Osmond said, "you can't control that sort of thing."

"We could control the ack-ack," Joe said, "if you didn't have international agreements."

This was getting trying. "Now listen," Mr. Osmond said, "you do business in one country. You're pretty good, you see a chance in the next country. You step over the border, and you're Osmond Canadian. You step over another border, you're Osmond Mexican. Then pretty soon," he said, "you have an office in Berlin and Tokyo, and you're Osmond International. Naturally," he said, "the Berlin and Tokyo offices do business with Berlin and Tokyo. It looks pretty bad during a war," he said, "but after a war there's the problem of unemployment. Outside of your father and Billy Mitchell, very few people objected before this war when we made planes for Japan. In fact, it kept people working."

Joe thought to say something: And now they pay off with their sons and daughters. He saw something, Mr. Osmond's cartels were a sort of super-state, cutting across all national lines and boundaries. He felt, for the moment, that guys like himself, who cared about the United States and went to fight for it, were suckers. And guys in Berlin and Tokyo were suckers when they yelled "*Heil*" and "*Banzai*." Mr. Osmond and his Jap friends and his German friends made suckers out of all of 'em. He thought of Ron. "In the name of the dead," he said, "why don't you cut this out?"

And now he knew the answer to the question Mr. Osmond had asked him before, when Mr. Osmond said, What do you want me to do about it? "Listen, Mr. Osmond," he said, "you made me an offer, and I'd like to take it, at least some of it. You can have the new housing, you can have the jack. But anything that's going to be used in war will have to be used for the United States. Or," he said, "for the World Court, or whatever it is that might keep the peace."

Osmond smiled. He said, "I'd like all your stuff."

"No cartels," Joe said.

Mr. Osmond looked at him, smiled. He did not feel he was in any way different. But he would indulge the boy because he liked him. "All right," Mr. Osmond said.

Joe smiled. It was some kind of victory, but he understood its bitter pill. He knew Mr. Osmond was humouring him. He started to go up and down. And about the idea of certain men making money out of blood, "Is it always going to be this way?" he said.

Osmond looked at him, saw the far-off light in his eyes, realized what he was talking about. "Yes, it's always going to be this way."

Joe shook his head, he didn't believe it. He knew there was an economy of peace that could employ just as many people, maybe more people than the economy of war. Europe had to be rebuilt, Asia had to be rebuilt, in the United States Railroad Street was a disgrace, that long street across the country that you saw from a train window, that looked much as it had looked since the Civil War. Hundreds of blocks of Pittsburgh were a disgrace. The rotted wooden shacks with no other redeeming feature than the service stars in the windows, why shouldn't they be bulldozered down, just run a bulldozer through the whole rotten mess, and put up livable places for people, with plumbing, bathtubs, electric lights. Before the war one-third of the nation should have been rebuilt. Jesus Christ, he thought, where was the great new world, where was the promise they made us at the beginning of the war, a more decent world, a more decent life . . . ? He said something of the sort, and Mr. Osmond smiled and said, "Now look, son, you've saved my soul about cartelizing your inventions, let's consider me redeemed for to-day. How about some lunch and we'll talk over the contract?"

Joe nodded, he understood, he had come to his limit with this man, and being there was going to be lunch and a contract, "Look, Mr. Osmond," he said, "could I bring my girl?"

Stella liked Mr. Osmond. She liked the way he took one frank look at her, and accepted her, and didn't look at her ankles or her female equipment, but rather looked into her eyes, and took her as a person, at least during lunch. He also appealed to her wisdom, being mildly amusing about the things that worried Joe,

saying, "Miss Witowski, do you share his views about all that?"

"I tell him not to worry," she said.

That's right, Osmond almost said, be a woman, cradle men and babies in your arms. Let life go on, and for the pain of life, you be the anodyne. But he said none of that, and smiling into her beautiful eyes, "You're a nice girl," he said.

He was likely to have quite a lot to do with this young man, manufacturing his things. And who knows, the young man might even be his heir, for indeed, why not give it to him rather than Luthe, Sylvia and her Communists? And all this considered, he wanted to be on solid ground about a few things. And looking at her, "You love him?" he said.

And with something of all she felt drifting through her eyes, "I love him," she said.

Joe took her hands, and his dark eyes looking into hers, Mr. Osmond saw he was saying the same thing to her.

What were they talking about? Mr. Osmond said to himself. He understood the love of a man for his son. But man-woman love? He remembered a conversation with the Judge about love. He had told the Judge the truth, saying, "I don't know what that kind of love is." He didn't. He knew just about everything else in the world, but this he didn't know. It was the time the Judge had first given vent to his phrase, "the soullessness of the engineer." Eugene Osmond did not believe himself soulless, or engineers soulless, but he knew what the Judge was talking about. The Judge needed some emotion from a woman, he was a poor human thing.

This boy and his girl were human things. They had the human desires and woes. Eugene Osmond knew what he was, he was a monster, a monstrosity. He liked it, he loved it, in the chapel of his soul he was down on his knees before his own monstrosity. The griffin breathing flame, the elephant going off to die in the elephant cemetery, the mammoth encased in ice, these were his spiritual kin. So too the mammoths and behemoths of art and literature, Balzac, Rodin, Nietzsche, Dreiser, Tolstoy, Beethoven, all those who saw the monumental and monstrous architecture of life, human history, he felt himself in some strange relationship with them. The Meccano set of Pittsburgh, the water faucet they called Dnieprostroi, those were his arts, his enterprises. And with them he expressed something, his own kind of love, a love too great for others to understand. Power. That's what he loved.

With one little watt of his power, with one little chip of all the chips he had, he could set these kids up, put them in business, put them in the game. And why not? He not only meant to be fair to the boy, but he saw the boy's place, a rather clever oiler, adjuster, innovator in the Meccano set of Pittsburgh.

And looking at the young man, "Joe, let's get down to business." And assuring him that the contracts would be ready in a couple of days, and would provide for no cartelization, just as agreed, "How about a small cheque to seal the bargain?"

Joe and Stella looked at each other. Joe had the feeling: oh God, I've made it. Life begins. . . . Mr. Osmond wrote a cheque, handed it to him. The cheque was for five thousand dollars. There was a space on the left for the "description," and here Mr. Osmond had written, "Advance Royalties on Inventions."

"It's too much," Joe said.

"No it isn't," Mr. Osmond said. "In a little while you will have earned more than that on your automobile jack." Joe had a strange thought. If Mr. Osmond was after you he was hard to escape from. He was also hard to escape from if he wanted to be nice to you. Joe handed the cheque to Stell.

She just looked at it, looked at him in a very serious way.

"And now," Mr. Osmond said, "what are you going to do?"

"Well," said Joe, "I'd like to get out of my case." Mr. Osmond said he would call the Judge, but Joe said, "Well, my lawyer started it, maybe he'd like to finish it."

"And then?" Mr. Osmond said.

"I'd like to get married," Joe said, and he looked at Stell. Her eyes dwelled with him——

"And then?" Mr. Osmond said.

"Well, I guess I'll go to work." And upon Mr. Osmond's asking him what he would like to do; Joe told him, he would like to work in light metals. He had a feeling that a good deal of the future of the United States and the world would be streamlined and achieved in light metals.

"Why don't you work for me," Mr. Osmond said, "at Osmond New Metals? It's the best new metals plant in Pittsburgh."

Joe didn't know. There was much he didn't like about the grasping closeness of all this. But the truth was that Osmond New Metals was the best new metals plant in Pittsburgh.

Mr. Osmond, feeling his hesitancy, said a strange and interest-

ing thing. "Joe," he said, "I want you to forget about the Squire and Mr. Delehanty and all those people. Because," he said, "they don't count. I want to tell you something, Joe. Only you and I count. Because we can do something."

And Joe, for all this amused him and repelled him, knew what he meant. He wanted to work and develop things. Mr. Osmond had the money, the engineering ability, and the capacity for seeing things through.

But he said nothing. He felt this moment was over, he wanted to go along, he wanted to be alone with Stell.

Joe and Stell were in his room. They looked at the cheque, and looked at it. "If we look at it any more," she said, "we'll wear it out."

"Let's get married, Stell," he said.

He thought she would be overjoyed, instead her great blue eyes looked at him with utmost seriousness. "Joe," she said, "I've got to be married in church."

He understood now the reason for her seriousness, she had known instinctively they would bump on this. "You mean a Catholic Church?"

"Why yes, Joe," she said with considerable dignity, "in my church, with Father Tadeusz."

A Polish Catholic Church. No, he couldn't do it. "Look, Stell," he said, "Father Tadeusz is a nice man." He saw the chilly blue refined eyes of Father Tadeusz. "He helped us, I like him, but——"

"You won't do it."

He shook his head, he wouldn't do it.

"Why not, Joe?"

He didn't know.

"You don't like Catholics, Joe."

"It isn't that," he said. He knew some Catholics he liked, some he didn't.

"It's like my mother says," said she, a bit of hopelessness drifting through her eyes, "it's better if you stay with your own."

"Oh for Chrissake!" he said. "Look, Stell, are we going to have that old stuff for ever? Good God, men have fought and died about that kind of stuff." He felt some of the war had been in

vain. He saw the shadows of Guadal, men falling, Catholics, Protestants—

She saw his dark eyes looking down, his genuine perturbation. "Joey," she said, almost whispering, "you're a little like that . . . you're prejudiced too."

How tenderly, he thought, she looked at him, how sadly and lovingly. "Sweetheart," he said, "maybe you're right. I've felt things other people feel. About Polacks, about Jews"—he looked down, miserable in his dogged honesty.

And she, with her great eyes shining at him, something about her as tender and forgiving as a Madonna, "Then some of the fellows died in vain, Joey, for you too."

She's got me, he said to himself. "O.K.," he said, "now listen. I need time to get to things. But," he said, smiling at her, "let's not wait till I'm perfect to get married."

And she, smiling at him, feeling her tenderness and love for him, and wanting to make things right for their little boy, "But we will be married in some church, Joey? Maybe your mother's?"

That was funnier than she knew. "Mom is a Quaker," he said. "What they have, according to you, wouldn't be any kind of a wedding at all. They take each other."

She looked at him, her tenderness gone cold, almost unbelieving, as if this were the most heathenish thing possible. "Well, Joe," she said, "how about your father?"

"Pop," he said, "didn't exactly believe in God, except Benjamin Franklin's God, sort of the good spirit in the universe."

She was beginning to feel very depressed. "Joe, I don't see how we can get married, Joe."

And smiling at her, "Listen," he said, "we've been married a long time, because you've loved me and helped me and been true to me. And I've been true to you. And because we've got a baby. And," he said, "just to make it official, let's go to court, and you can have your family or Father Tadeusz for witnesses."

"Don't be silly," she said, "they wouldn't come. To them it wouldn't be any wedding at all."

Well, he thought, he had asked them. Now he came out with something that had been growing in his mind. "Stell," he said, "let's ask Judge Farjeon to marry us."

"Judge Farjeon?"

"Sure," he said, "he's a good guy. If not for him we mightn't

be here now." It was true, he thought, the things Judge Farjeon had allowed, that had enabled them to make some kind of a case.

But Stell wasn't thinking of anything like that. She thought of the court, the gloomy filthy corridor, the big spittoons, the tipstuffs and policemen. She had a different vision, flowers, a few girls in lovely pink or blue dresses, the organ, the sunlight coming through the stained glass. "It ought to be beautiful, Joey."

And looking into her eyes, "You're beautiful, sweetheart," he said, "and that's enough for me." As he looked into her eyes, and she into his, the threads of being seemed to intertwine, as if being woven on some great loom that wove people, love, life. He was not unaware that she had made a great concession to him, and for the love and tenderness she was to him, "Thank you, baby," he said.

She put her arms about him, and he held her and kissed her, and as they stood rocking in each other's arms, "Now listen, baby," he said, "to-morrow let's cash the cheque, and find some place to live, and go out and buy some furniture."

Her blue eyes looked up at him with a twinkle of her inner cuteness and femaleness. "You want to know something, Joey?" He said what. She smiled and said, "I'll get you in church yet."

Joe and Bennie had seen Lordy, Lordy had gone to Judge Fretz, the State had dropped its case against Joe Drew; he was free.

He was free too of his concern about what he was going to do. He had been to Osmond New Metals, Mr. Osmond had shown him around, he could have his pick of a job.

Osmond New Metals was somewhat different from most mills, it was smaller. It employed three hundred men a shift rather than the thousands upon thousands employed in the other Osmond mills. Osmond New Metals was an experimental station as well as a producing plant. Here they cooked alloys, hard steels, special steels that sold for thirty, forty, fifty, three hundred dollars a ton, steels that would not rust, steels that could cut other steels, steels lighter and more rigid than all other steels, steels alloyed with nickel, molybdenum, wolfram, chrome, these steels boiling, hissing, churning, flaming blue, yellow, purple, green in the electric furnace.

As in most mills, the cranes moved overhead, hot ingots flew about, the men at the furnace, which looked not unlike the furnace in your basement, wore dark glasses as they looked into the

rainbow inferno of steel, cooking at 3,300 degrees. No words were spoken, the great cranes with their swinging chains, the furnaces, the carting of boiling steel to the moulds, all these were put into motion by a language of signals, Mr. Osmond too communicating this way, as if even he, great god of steel that he was, were rendered deaf and dumb by the hissing, earth-shaking noise. In sign language Mr. Osmond communicated with the chef of the electric furnace, the man handed Mr. Osmond a pair of dark glasses, and a pair for Joe. Joe knew by their sign language something was about to go on. The chef opened the door of the furnace, the chef and Mr. Osmond looked at the rainbow of boiling steel, nodded to each other, now they would pour. And the steel soup sputtered out, yellow, blue, flame and green. Mr. Osmond signalled Joe, took him to another part of the plant, a fine and immaculate laboratory.

Joe felt a pang as he looked at the laboratory. He felt a pang because he knew he would not work there, at the beginning. Possibly he would later on, when he had worked his way up to it. For he was determined to start on the mill floor, as assistant to the chef, and learn how to mix the pot-pourri of special steels that made the modern world.

When Mr. Osmond heard his decision, he merely nodded, introduced him to the chef. The chef was a big man, with a big belly, a red and cindery complexion, and an astute and sensible face. This man, Wilkens by name, was one of the aristocrats of labour, he got something like two hundred dollars a week, he belonged to a union, he had seven children, four of them in the Service. He not merely tended the electric furnace, he directed the mixing of the particular stew, so much nickel for one metal, so much chrome in another. Then, as the pot cooked, he tested, almost tasting, but he didn't taste, he ladled out, he looked, he almost felt, he sensed. And with each new soup, he ladled in some of the slag of the last, mixing and testing on the sand of the mill floor. At first, Joe's duties were to bring the proper amounts of alloy, place them on the floor before the furnace, mix according to the chef's directions, stand by, learn by experience how to approximate the colour of the steel when the steel was done. Then he was to press the button which tilted the furnace forward, watch the steel pour out of the metal mouth of the furnace, the furnace looking at these times like a mechanical man spewing

steel and flame. And he was to help carry the boiling steel to the mould.

Such was his job, his beginnings in the world in which he hoped to work. Good, he would start Monday.

The wedding party foregathered in Judge Farjeon's court.

Stella wore a blue suit, of a light colour that went with her eyes. And a blue hat. She cried a little, as they entered the court. Her father and mother, decent Polish people, and good Catholics, didn't want to come, it was no wedding to them, but at the last moment she had prevailed upon them. They were there, and not there, with stiff, formal, aggrieved eyes.

And Mom, and Uncle Charlie, and Woolbine and Bennie.

Judge Farjeon asked them into chambers. Ben Jordan thought of the first time he had come about the case and asked Judge Farjeon to hear it. And Judge Farjeon looked at him as if thinking the same thing. "Well," Judge Farjeon said, "shall we begin now?"

He smiled, and started with a little sermon, he looked at those present, "We all know something about these young people," he said, "they've had quite a time." He thought of the One who had made wine for the wedding, he wished he could do the same. But he couldn't. He spoke of it. "Spiritually, however," he said, "we do something like that. We offer these young people the wine of life. Which they will have," he said, "if they cherish each other."

He thought of all the divorce cases he had heard, but tried to get it out of mind. And with some few remarks as to how they had won each other by helping each other, and how, as they all knew, these two young people had solved their troubles, he began the short ceremony.

"Do you, Joseph Drew, take this woman for your lawful wedded wife?"

"I do."

Somehow, Joe couldn't think of what went on. He thought of the court, with Stoney and Stell and Bennie, and Stell on the stand. And how they had won each other, by standing by each other. He thought too of his baby, his boy, that someone was minding. And now the thing was over, she had the ring on her

finger, she was crying, he smiled at her and got her to smile, he looked into her damp blue eyes, they looked like spring flowers after the rain. "Your eyes are like flowers after the rain," he said.

Mr. Witowski, grim with his handlebar moustaches, was shaking his hand.

It was, as Joe could see from the luminous dial of the clock, three in the morning. He lay in his nice new single bed, but he couldn't sleep. Stell was in the other bed, she was asleep. From the next room he heard the cute little snoring of the baby.

Joe wondered why he couldn't sleep. Something kept bothering him. Are you satisfied? something said.

He ought to be. He had a nice wife, a nice baby. The apartment was comfortable, the furniture was new, and Mom had sent a few old pieces down from the farm. He had a job, his inventions were going to be made, he had money in the bank.

What bothers you? something said.

It was his deal with Osmond. And he knew something. He could deal with Mr. Osmond the engineer. But he was the eternal enemy of Mr. Osmond the killer, the war-maker.

He thought of something. Here he was, with his nice wife and baby. What was the good of it, if they were going to be rubbed out by the next war?

For he saw now the pattern of the next war, the robot-bomb war. As the aeroplane of World War I had cast the shadow of the kind of war we were going to have in World War II, so the robot bomb cast the shadow of World War III. No armies, no uniforms. No "chauffeurs," as some of the generals in some armies called aviators. Just a few guys sitting around, releasing the ultimate perfection in robot bombs, and whole cities, whole countries, whole continents could be wiped out.

And Stell and the baby under the wreckage. So the time had come, brother, to wake up.

Joe was jolted into full awareness. He got up. He did not turn on the light. There was a certain amount of light in the apartment from the reddish light of the mills. As he wanted not to wake Stell and the baby, and as the apartment was new to him, he groped cautiously.

He was in the living-room. As he stood by the windows he could see the lights of the mills, a rim of red around Pittsburgh. Pitts-

burgh was ringed by flame, it was the cauldron, producing much of World War II, working out the shape of the post-war world.

Pittsburgh was the inferno in which the robot-bomb war might be made. Joe Drew thought of something. As a boy he had played war. He had been in a war. Now he hated war. And the people and the loose thinking and the loose talk that made for war. And he hated that part of Mr. Osmond. Mr. Osmond, in a manner of speaking, had been his fairy godmother. Mr. Osmond was part good genius, part evil genius. He admired Mr. Osmond the engineer, but he hated Mr. Osmond the war-maker, the potential robot-bomb king.

Unfortunately, he did not know what to do about it. But he would try to find out. The miserable endless killing of humanity had to stop.

He thought of something. What a tremendous mobilization there had been for war. There would have to be an even more tremendous mobilization for peace, because peace was harder to get. But we had to get it. Or else Stell and the baby were going to be obliterated by a robot bomb.

It's some civilization we have. Very mechanical, highly inventive. Only we're more inventive about killing than anything else.

Me too. I've been inventive about killing. But I've got to be inventive about life. About making it better, not just for myself, but for the next guy. Or else there'll be another war.

He knew many people did not feel that way. There were men in the Service who did not feel that way. But that couldn't be helped. Those who felt this way had to do something about it.

What? I don't know. But I'll try and find out.

To-morrow I go to work. I take my place. Not just before the furnace in New Metals. But in life. And I have an idea in mind, a better life for man.

He heard Stell get up, come into the room. She looked at him, anxiously, wondering what he was doing up. And he, to comfort her, to make talk unnecessary, smiled at her, put his arms about her. Then he pointed out, at the crater of Pittsburgh. Beyond the red rim of the crater the sun was coming up.

Stell looked at him, her eyes saying: Joey, is everything all right?

He could nod to her. Because everything was going to be all

right. And their love and their work were going into making things all right. He knew something now, feeling her by his side. Whatever the broad vista of misery and death, one thing was eternally true.

Life begins. That was the triumph of life over all the forces of evil and death. The world got better. Human life got better.

And always and eternally, life begins.

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